



*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 Cynwyd Sant  
Ysgol Cynwyd Sant  
Pen-yr-Ysgol  
Maesteg  
CF34 9EY**

**Date of inspection: Ionawr 2014**

**by**

**Mr Eifion R Morgan  
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:

<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 Cynwyd Sant is a Welsh medium setting based in a portacabin on the yard of Ysgol Gynradd Cynwyd Sant in Maesteg. Maesteg is a valley town in the Llynfi Valley. The setting reports that it is an area of considerable socio-economically disadvantage. Children come from English speaking homes and rarely, if ever, hear Welsh being spoken in the community. No children from minority ethnic communities were present and no child had been identified as having additional learning needs.

The setting accepts children following their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday and move onto the next stage of their education in the September following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

Currently there are 23 children on the register, 10 of whom are 3 year olds, 9 of these children are funded. The setting is registered by the Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate a maximum of 16 children. The setting operates from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Friday during school term times. The main teaching room is entered via a small hallway which also leads to a kitchen area and toilet. This area also provides for information to be displayed on a notice board. The main teaching room is differentiated into activity areas; it is attractively decorated and warm.

The two members of staff are well qualified and have a very good relationship with the children and parents.

The setting was last inspected by CSSIW in 2012 and the recommendations addressed. The last Estyn inspection was in 2008 and all recommendations have been addressed.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because of:

- standards of achievement and children's progress;
- the care, support and guidance children enjoy;
- the quality of teaching;
- the learning opportunities provided for the children;
- children's behaviour and attitudes.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the quality of self-evaluation and development planning;
- the openness of the staff to new ideas and improvement;
- the setting's track record of improvement;
- the support provided by the Local Authority support teacher.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 continue to monitor the learning experiences provided for the children.
- R2 further refine assessment procedures and use the results when planning.
- R3 provide information for parents so that they can be more involved in children's learning.
- R4 when possible, provide facilities for children to have free access to the outside.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

All children make realistic progress and achieve good standards, relative to their age and “starting point”. Children recall previous learning well and acquire good knowledge, understanding and skills at a good rate.

All children are confident and happily converse with the inspector. They co-operate with each other and talk freely during play activities. All children listen attentively to adults and carry out instructions promptly and willingly. Their self-confidence and independence enables them to choose activities and to play independently and in small groups. Most children enjoy listening to stories and the older ones know some of the characters in the stories. These children enjoy singing and in particular action songs (Lliwiau'rEnfys). Many children enjoy mark making using chalk, pencils or crayons and know some of the functions of writing, such as making lists.

Children are developing mathematical skills and use mathematical language, such as “full, empty, half full” as when playing with sand. All children recognise simple two dimensional shapes, such as “triangles, circle and square”, and a few recognise more complex shapes, such as “cubes and spheres”.

All children are developing an understanding of technology including digital cameras and i-pads. They know that some toys can be programmed and operated using switches.

In this Welsh medium setting children are developing a realistic vocabulary that enables them to continue their education in Welsh. This is good progress in relation to their “starting point”. Children’s vocabulary includes recognising and responding appropriately to adults and using specific words interspaced with their English, such as “we’re going to look for *shapiau*”. Their immersion in the Welsh language enables them to reach realistic standards. Parents, in discussion, stated a high degree of satisfaction with children’s personal, social and academic development.

### Wellbeing: Good

All children participate enthusiastically in the different activities set out for them. They have sufficient self-confidence to make choices and work independently but are quite happy to work in pairs or in small groups. All children demonstrate good behaviour, are considerate and courteous. They relate very well to each other and show affection for one another. All children have good attitudes to learning and sustain concentration for significant lengths of time when engaged on tasks.

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

Learning experiences are well planned and successfully capture children's interest ensuring that all are actively involved in the different activities. Planning is done collaboratively and is sufficiently flexible to respond to local incidents, such as a sudden snowfall. This was the stimulus for a range of activities, such as deducing what had left marks in the snow.

Planning is well focused on developing children's progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes and whilst the curriculum builds on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills there is some imbalance in the provision.

A notable and good feature of the planning and learning experience is the importance given to develop personal relationships. The planning successfully includes good opportunities for children to work together and to form good relationships. There is a culture of tolerance in the setting and children respect each other. They have the confidence to tackle new experiences and to become independent learners. Whilst recently the main focus has been on developing children's numeracy skills, planning has included a full range of skills in keeping with the requirements of the Foundation Phase outcomes.

The indoor environment is imaginative and provides for children to develop their skills. The outdoor environment enables children to develop their knowledge and understanding of living things and how they are cared for.

In this Anglicised community the development of the Welsh language is given priority as is the celebration of Welsh festivals.

**Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and an up-to-date knowledge of child development. Practitioners have high expectations of children, whatever their ability, and plan a good balance between child-selected and adult-led activities. There is an appropriate emphasis on providing opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement.

Staff are good role models and this helps children develop their language skills. Children are respected as individuals and their behaviour is very good. Staff know when to intervene in children's play and when to allow them to work independently. The teaching room provides children with a challenging and exciting environment ensuring children's participation in learning. The good use of questioning by the staff is well focused on maintaining children's involvement and to develop their thinking skills.

Each child's achievement and progress is recorded on individual assessment booklets. Staff are vigilant in noting children's achievement and each child's progress is recorded in "My learning journey" booklet. This accompanies the child to their receiving school. Records include the children's achievement across the six areas of learning.

Planning, such as in numeracy, takes into account each child's achievement enabling focused tasks to be well matched to children's needs and identifying the next steps in learning. This is an example of good practice that needs to be extended, particularly to identifying children's language skills.

Parents are kept informed of children's progress through regular informal meetings and end of year reports.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

Relevant policies and arrangements are in place to promote healthy living, to encourage children to act sustainably and to ensure their wellbeing. Children's emotional and physical health and wellbeing is given priority and this is supported by the views of the parents.

Children are happy and secure in the company of adults. They know that they are respected and they, in turn, show respect for adults. Children, by their responses, indicate that they know who to turn to for help and are sufficiently confident to ask for help if necessary. The setting is a calm environment with no indication of any anti-social behaviour.

All children have a good understanding of living in a community. The setting fosters values such as honesty, fairness and tolerance and a clear understanding of what is right and wrong.

Children show responsibility and a willingness to share. Behaviour is good and children are keen to help, such as when clearing away.

Overall, these children show good attitudes and self-discipline that contributes well to the feeling of wellbeing apparent in the setting. Children are being encouraged to act sustainably, such as composting waste food and collecting paper.

The setting celebrates Welsh customs, such as St. David's day.

Children's learning needs are identified on entry and these are met. Good arrangements are in place to support children with additional learning needs. Children identified with such needs have their own individual educational plans and parents are kept fully involved. Good links have been established with relevant professional bodies.



The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

**Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. Practitioners are sensitive to the needs of the children and provide them with learning experiences based on play.

The setting provides the children with a calm, supportive environment free of any form of oppressive or anti-social behaviour.

Practitioners are appropriately qualified and experienced. Resources are well matched to children's needs and to the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Children use the outdoor yard for physical activities on a daily basis. There are also containers for growing seeds and bulbs. Visits to the nearby woodland area enable children to look for mini-beasts and use magnifying glasses to observe them. The setting does not have facilities to allow children free access to the outside environment.

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

Roles and responsibilities are well defined and practitioners work well as a team. A sense of purpose is evident in the setting, focused on providing the best educational provision for the children. Since taking over the leadership and management of the setting a year ago a great deal has been achieved. During this time the teaching room has been completely reorganised and the activity areas established provide worthwhile areas and are in keeping with the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Very good use is made of all the available space and activities are well matched to children's needs, interests and ability.

Time is well managed and this ensures that children are actively involved. Staff have high expectations of the children and these are very largely achieved in practice.

Practitioners have an open mind and are receptive of new ideas. They have acted on advice and set challenging but realistic targets for improvement. They have co-operated well with outside staff and established very good relationships with parents and carers.

Overall, the setting has a positive ethos where everyone is challenged to do their best and to promote and to sustain improvements. Practitioners share values, behaviour strategies and the importance of good relationships.

All changes are firmly focused on improving the provision for children and meeting their needs. A self-critical culture evident in the setting means that staff are continually striving for improvement and they realise the importance of monitoring and evaluating outcomes. Such monitoring and evaluation is at an early stage of development but the basic format is established. Policies and initiatives, including those that meet local and national priorities, are implemented consistently.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting's self-evaluation process is effective drawing on regular quality assurance procedures. Staff are self-critical and assess the outcomes of their teaching and children's learning. Practitioners know their setting well. Self-evaluation has also relied on external evaluation and the contributions of the local authority support teacher have been invaluable. Her advice and analysis has been freely accepted by the practitioners and firmly embedded in the work of the setting. This is an example of good practice where planning is shared and regularly reviewed. The results are improvement in standards and quality of the provision.

In view of the time scale, monitoring is at an early stage of development but is having an impact. The setting is well aware of this and monitoring is highlighted in the current development plan. The development plan prioritises matters identified to improve the setting and based on the allocation of appropriate funding.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Practitioners have been effective over the last year in establishing good relationships with parents and carers. In discussion with a number of parents and carers it is obvious that they are very supportive of the setting and value its contribution to their child's personal, social and educational development. Parents and carers spoke of their child's enjoyment and willingness to attend and their enthusiasm for the activities undertaken. All spoke very highly of the staff. They were easy to approach and very supportive. This partnership makes a strong contribution to children's good achievement and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work. They are invited into the setting at the end of each half term to celebrate their child(ren)'s achievements and to view the work undertaken. Parents also visit for fundraising activities, such as to fundraise for an outside fenced area.

There are good links with the receiving primary school. The children know the teachers who regularly visit the setting. Transition arrangements are very effective and a strength of the setting.

Effective links are in place with professional organisations but especially with the local authority advisory teacher. Her contribution has been fundamental in

developing the setting to its present good standard. This is an exemplar of very good practice.

Community links and the work of the management committee are underdeveloped.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting is a strong learning community. Staff are appropriately qualified and have attended a good range of professional courses which supports their continuous professional development. Practitioners use a good range of teaching strategies which successfully capture children's interest and ensure their participation. Practitioners are self-critical and seek ways to improve the provision for the children. They reflect on their own practice and seek ways to improve benefiting from advice.

The setting is well resourced to meet children's needs. The teaching room is well differentiated into activity areas. Children use the outside playground regularly but, as yet, do not have free access to the outside.

The setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Stake holder 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

Mr Eifion R Morgan	Arolygydd Cofnodol
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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>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (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.