



*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 Nelson  
21a Commercial Street  
Nelson  
Caerphilly  
CF46 6NF**

**Date of inspection: January 2012**

**by**

**Nicholas Jones  
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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## About the setting

Cylch Meithrin Nelson is a Welsh medium cylch based in Nelson, Caerphilly. All the children attending the cylch come from the village and the surrounding area. The area is recognised as being neither socially nor economically advantaged or disadvantaged.

The cylch has been in this location since 1995 and has sole use of the building and the outdoor area. The building is on two floors.

The cylch reports that around a third of the children come from homes where Welsh is spoken. Children represent the full range of ability and the cylch accepts children with additional learning needs. One child in the current group is recognised as having additional learning needs. The cylch receives assistance from outside agencies to support children that have additional needs. No children attending at present are from a minority ethnic background and none come from socially disadvantaged homes.

The cylch is registered for a maximum of 26 children and it accepts children from two years old. There are currently up to 26 children attending the cylch at different times during the week. Seven of these are three years old. The Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority support the cylch.

The leader has held the position since 2002. Six members of staff assist her, on either a full or part time basis, and they are all suitably qualified.

There is an informative booklet available for parents and carers that provides them with details of the cylch. Parents and carers bring their children into the cylch and this provides for a meeting with the staff if needed. The cylch is open for five days a week between 9am and 12.30pm.

The cylch is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. The management committee oversees the work of the cylch.

The cylch was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in November 2011 and was awarded the Cylch Rhagorol certificate in April 2011. Estyn inspected the cylch in 2006.

## 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 cylch is good because:

- nearly all children show good progress and achievement in all areas of learning;
- nearly all children enjoy and have positive attitudes to learning;
- nearly all children behave responsibly;
- learning experiences are planned well;
- all children are supported well and benefit from a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum;
- the teaching is effective and concentrates well on Foundation Phase outcomes;
- good resources are available, which includes the interesting outdoor area;
- adults speak Welsh well and this has a positive effect on how children learn the language;
- the leadership and management are good;
- there is a good relationship between adults and children; and
- the staff work effectively together, which contributes purposefully to the success of the cylch.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leadership and staff provide a clear direction for the work of the cylch;
- changes and developments over time show that the cylch has a good record of improving for the sake of the children;
- the leadership is self evaluative, with clear targets and a purposeful annual development plan for improvements;
- the whole staff have a positive and active attitude towards development and training;
- good support links are used consistently; and
- the learning environment is stimulating.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve, the cylch needs to:

R1 ensure that daily assessments are consistently completed and that they lead directly to children's targets; and

R2 ensure that all staff are aware of individual children's targets.

### **What happens next?**

The cylch will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

**Good**

#### **Standards: Good**

Nearly all children achieve good standards of achievement and make appropriate progress in all areas of learning. There is no significant difference in the standards of different groups of children in the cylch.

Nearly all children make positive progress in developing their literacy skills in the Welsh language. Whilst a few children are reluctant to use the language on occasions, the majority have a good understanding of the language. Nearly all the children have well-developed listening skills. Nearly all the children enjoy and are eager to contribute to stories that are read to them.

They all answer questions enthusiastically and this illustrates clearly their developing understanding of the language. Most children respond sensibly to group discussions and know the day and the weather. Another notable feature of their developing competence is that they respond in Welsh with very little prompting to colours and numbers.

Many children choose to look at books independently. They hold books appropriately and study pictures and print with interest. They recognise the main characters in a story and discuss the content of a story enthusiastically with each other.

Most children are beginning to develop their writing skills and a notable feature of their early writing is that they understand the purpose of writing through practical tasks. They, therefore, see the purpose of mark making and of their early writing. A minority of children are beginning to form recognisable letters of the alphabet independently.

Nearly all children are developing their numeracy skills well through the practical use of number, using mathematical language such as 'smaller than' or 'larger than' and through using two and three-dimensional shapes. Nearly all children can group objects by colour or shape.

Many children use electronic equipment well. They use digital cameras for recording and use the computer with confidence through controlling the necessary equipment. All children enjoy participating in music making. They have a good awareness of a store of Welsh songs and nursery rhymes, which they sing enthusiastically.

Nearly all children are fully engaged in every activity and concentrate and persevere for significant periods of time. They make decisions and work well independently inside and outside the building. Nearly all the children participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities available to them that successfully develops their creative skills and the knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children, relative to their age, have an appropriate understanding of how they can keep healthy. They know, for example, when they need to wash their hands and do so with little prompting. Most children have the good knowledge that a healthy diet incorporates fruit and vegetables, which they purchase from the local shop regularly.

Nearly all the children's attitude to learning is good. They show interest in their work and in the activities planned for them. Nearly all children sustain good concentration for significant periods of time and make decisions independently.

All children relate very well to each other, to adults and visitors. They are courteous and considerate and willing to share resources. All children take a full part in the life and activities of the cylch, through offering suggestions and challenges to adults. They have worthwhile opportunities to suggest their own ideas and these are, when possible, incorporated into children's tasks and activities.

Community links also draws children's attention to those people, such as builders and people who look after them. Overall, all children display a sense of belonging to their community, which they visit regularly. They are happy and well cared for and free from any form of harassment.

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

The curriculum is planned well to meet the philosophy of the Foundation Phase curriculum and to achieve the identified outcomes of children's learning. The curriculum builds effectively on children's previous knowledge and experiences and incorporates enriched opportunities for the development of skills across the curriculum.

Time is set aside weekly, when all staff meet to plan the curriculum. This provides the children with useful and interesting activities. The curriculum is flexible and is matched appropriately to the children's interests.

There are worthwhile opportunities incorporated into the day-to-day working of the cylch for children to develop their self-confidence and to become independent learners. Whilst specific activities are planned, children have the freedom to select their own tasks and activities.

Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their basic and key skills of literacy, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creativity. An effective aspect of children's learning experiences is the provision made for children to acquire the Welsh language. Welsh is not always the natural language of communication between adults and children. However, through coherent opportunities, all children, whatever their background, display enjoyment in speaking the language. The provision for developing the children's information

technology skills is good and the staff consistently direct the children towards the use of technological resources.

Children have many opportunities to develop their thinking skills through challenging activities, which focus on every area of learning in their turn.

The traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales are given due emphasis, like the celebration of St. David's Day. Good opportunities are also provided for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions, such as during their study of the Chinese New Year and Diwali. Such activities help children to develop a good understanding of the wider world and raise their awareness of age appropriate global citizenship effectively.

The purposeful provision includes opportunities for all children to develop respect for each other; opportunities to form good relationships with each other and with adults; and to become tolerant of each other.

All children have good opportunities to plant seeds, look after plants and recycle. This begins their understanding of plant growth and sustainability effectively.

### **Teaching: Good**

The staff have a good, practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a very positive relationship between all the staff and the children.

The staff have high expectations of the children and these expectations are put into practice well. The staff's active role in planning the curriculum ensures the best use of their expertise. When a focus activity is introduced, there are consistent references to the learning objectives and the success criteria.

The system of sharing responsibilities is new, which means that the staff are beginning to develop detailed knowledge of a small number of children.

There is a good balance between adult directed and child selected activities, both indoors and out of doors. All children are free to select from either independent or adult led activities.

Staff model language effectively to the children's development levels and use questioning well to develop children's thinking and communication skills. The standard of the staff's Welsh is appropriate to the needs of the cylch. The staff provide a stimulating environment that successfully ensures every child's involvement and enjoyment.

On the whole, assessment procedures and the recording of children's achievements are completed efficiently. However, the daily assessments do not lead directly to children's targets. Therefore, the staff are not totally aware of individual children's targets.

There are records of children's achievements available to parents at any time.



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

The cylch's provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing is good. All children enjoy their time at the cylch. They arrive showing a sense of anticipation and are keen to get involved. They partake enthusiastically in activities set out for them. The broad curriculum, which consists of visits and visitors, develops and extends children's experiences well.

Follow-up work in the classroom shows the wide range of experiences that arise from their activities and the children's sense of wonder. Visits to the community and visitors to the cylch develop children's knowledge and understanding of their own community effectively.

The cylch's provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Values, such as honesty, fairness, respect and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered through the day-to-day activities and accepted without question. All children know and accept the social norms of living together, sharing and accepting the views of others and being members of a community. Individual children, in turn, accept specific responsibilities, like tidying resources and equipment, which develops their self-esteem. The cylch is an organised unit, where children value each other and in turn, the staff value them.

Children's cultural development is good, which incorporates Welsh customs and traditions and it extends to other cultures when the children celebrate events like the Chinese New Year and Diwali.

The cylch's staff are vigilant in identifying children requiring specialist help. They make use of professional help and guidance effectively when necessary. Staff have received regular and appropriate training.

The cylch has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The cylch is secure, where the entrance door and gate are locked and only opened by a member of staff, consequently no one can enter or a child leave unaccompanied. Good care is taken when children are being collected to ensure they are in the care of their parents or of a known carer.

Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that any child suspected of requiring additional help is noted and their progress is monitored closely. The cylch's leader is the additional learning needs co-ordinator and is familiar with the necessary procedures for supporting such a child.

Where necessary, external agencies are involved and support is provided if needed. At present, one child has additional learning needs.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The cylch, through its day-to-day activities and the approach adopted by the staff promotes a positive ethos. Staff know the children well and their individuality is recognised. All children have equal access to a stimulating curriculum supported by an interesting outside area. The homely atmosphere and the friendship provided by

the staff ensures that a tolerant attitude pervades the cylch. The cylch employs positive behaviour strategies that successfully eliminate any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. All children enjoy equality of opportunity.

The cylch's staff are well qualified and experienced and there is a very favourable adult to child ratio. Staff expertise is used well both in planning and in supervising activities. The cylch uses its resources well to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the needs of the children. The resources are accessible to children and this promotes the children's sense of independence and responsibility.

The local environment is used effectively through visits to nearby businesses and the library. This contributes well to children's understanding of the world around them.

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

The staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and work together well as a team, sharing values, aims and objectives. The leader involves the staff, managers and representatives of outside agencies in planning. This practice ensures the best use of their expertise. The leader is actively involved, giving clear directions and accepting advice. This commitment leads to a sense of purpose to the work of the cylch. There is a positive ethos and a vision to provide the best possible experiences for the children.

The leadership and staff are focused well on children's needs and the cylch successfully achieves this aim in practice. Staff have received relevant and appropriate training and this has impacted well on the quality of provision provided.

Effective links with the parents and carers are in place. They are kept well informed of their children's achievements and progress and this helps them to support their children's learning.

There is a well-established management structure in place with a clear definition of duties. The leader and managers delegate responsibilities effectively to others when needed to do so. The management of the cylch has taken good account of relevant legislation and the guidance meets legal requirements in full.

The cylch has taken good account of national priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum. It has also made good use of opportunities to work with local schools, the Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority to ensure effective links. The work of the management committee through overseeing the practices of the cylch is effective.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The cylch self-evaluates appropriately and identifies areas for improvement, implementing them for the benefit of the children. This has included developing the

outdoor area to broaden the children's experiences and independence and the use of questionnaires for parents, to express their views.

The areas for improvement are targeted effectively and concisely against relevant success criteria and timescales in the cylch's development plans. The development plans arise directly from the findings of the self-evaluation process and are given priority in the development of the cylch. The leaders discuss the process with confidence, understanding and clarity.

Staff have made very good use of training opportunities and professional learning experiences, including vocational qualifications, which are impacting well on children's learning and wellbeing.

The cylch has addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection effectively.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Parents, in the questionnaire replies and during discussions expressed their satisfaction with the cylch and are appreciative of the standards of care and the quality of education available. They appreciate the open door policy and the opportunities they have to meet staff on a daily basis.

By the time the children leave the cylch, parents feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The links with the local schools, the Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority are good.

The support provided by the staff of the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin benefits the cylch. The advice and suggestions have helped in moving the cylch forward and has contributed to the good standards of provision.

### **Resource management: Good**

The cylch's staff teach well and the staff work together effectively. Planning is completed collaboratively and this results in individual expertise being used successfully for the benefit of every child.

The cylch is resourced well and the resources available are used effectively to further the aims of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The resources are also accessible to the children and this encourages independence and has a positive impact on their learning.

The cylch uses the building and the outdoor area very effectively and provides appropriate experiences, which are planned well. The leader and managers lead effectively and use support agencies purposefully.

The cylch 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 (less than 10).

#### **Responses to discussions with learners**

All children are happy in the cylch. Their enthusiasm is evident when they arrive and meet with their peers. Nearly all of them are self-confident from knowing that they are supported well and that they are provided with interesting and challenging tasks.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

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

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</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 (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.