



A report on
Cylch Meithrin Grangetown a'r Bae

**St Paul's Community Hall
Paget Street
Grangetown
Cardiff
CF11 7LR**

T/007/10N

Date of inspection: December 2010

by

Mr Eifion R Morgan

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 Grangetown a'r Bae is located in the church hall in the grounds of St. Paul's Church of the Apostle in Grangetown, Cardiff. The Cylch has sole use of the hall each morning, but resources and equipment have to be set out and cleared away for each session, as it is a multipurpose hall.

The Cylch is approached via a sizeable entrance hall where details of the Cylch are displayed and this provides an area for parents to meet and for children to hang their coats and bags. The Cylch makes use of the kitchen facilities for the preparation of snacks and for cooking activities. Toilet facilities are adequate.

The Cylch is appropriately equipped with a good range of free play activities. This includes opportunities for children's writing and mark-making, imaginative play, creative work, role play and a reading area. A large mat enables the children to sit for morning registration and story time when the children meet as a group.

The Cylch is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to receive up to 32 children aged 2½ - 4 years. Currently there are 19 on the register, of whom 9 are 3 year olds and currently funded. The children come from the immediate locality – an area described by the Cylch as neither particularly advantaged nor disadvantaged socio-economically. The Cylch welcomes children from ethnic communities and children with additional learning needs (ALN).

Nearly half the children come from homes where Welsh is the language spoken at home and none are learning English as an additional language.

The Cylch was inspected by the CSSIW in November 2010 and issues raised have been addressed. It has not previously been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

Main evaluation

- The provision for the care, guidance and support of the children is good.
- The arrangements for ensuring children's wellbeing are good.
- The staff work together very well as a team.
- Overall children make good progress.
- The parents are very satisfied with the provision and with the progress their child/ren is/are making.

Prospects for improvement

- The current leader and staff have worked together well to develop the Cylch with noticeable improvement in planning and assessment over the last 3 months.
- The management committee are proactive, seeking ways to promote and develop the setting.
- This setting is self-evaluative and has successfully overcome a recent change of leadership.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the setting needs to:

- R1 plan for children's learning so that activities are well matched to children's ability and to ensure that the learning builds progressively on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills;
- R2 refine its assessment procedures so as to indicate clearly children's achievements, to identify the next steps in children's learning and to use the results to inform planning;
- R3 incorporate into the self-evaluation report priorities for improvement and an evaluation of what has been achieved.

What happens next?

The Cylch management will produce an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations.

Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority and reported to Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children make realistic progress in all areas of learning. They work and play diligently, showing interest in the activities set out for them. Children are confident to make choices and persevere on their tasks.

All children have good communication skills relative to their age. They express themselves using appropriate vocabulary, listen to adults and carry out instructions promptly. Many children show an interest in books; they select their favourite stories and hold books correctly. A few children experiment with writing, holding pencils appropriately and making recognisable marks on paper. These children know the functions of writing.

Many children recognise pattern and match different shapes. A minority of children name and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes including squares, triangles and circles. They are beginning to understand basic mathematical language, such as "full" and "empty". There are no opportunities for children to use technology, such as battery operated toys or to use computer programmes.

All children are developing a good Welsh vocabulary relative to their linguistic background. Those from Welsh speaking homes speak clearly, whilst those from English speaking homes understand basic instructions and have a developing grasp of the language. All children respond well and enjoy Welsh action songs and rhymes and all perform enthusiastically.

Wellbeing: Good

All children, in their daily activities, show that they feel safe and free from physical and verbal abuse in the Cylch. They show an enjoyment in learning and a caring attitude towards each other. Children are happy to share equipment and take turns. All children behave well and relate well to adults.

Children are given healthy snacks mid morning and are beginning to appreciate healthy eating. All children enjoy robust physical activity.

This is a close community and the Cylch is an integral part of it. Children are valued and respected and are increasingly given opportunities to make decisions.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Adequate

Planning is successful in providing all children with interesting activities that fully engage them and enables children to progress towards the Foundation Phase

outcomes. However, the planning does not ensure that children's knowledge and understanding are developed systematically. Neither does the planning provide for sufficient differentiated work so that activities are well matched to children's different ages and abilities and to provide for them to become independent learners.

Relationships are very good in the Cylch. Adults show respect for the children who in turn respect each other and adults. An atmosphere of tolerance is evident and children develop caring attitudes.

Adults, in their dealing with children, seek opportunities to develop children's basic skills, particularly their communication skills and there are good opportunities for children to develop their creative skills. Children are given good encouragement to use the Welsh language. The planning overall, however, to developing children's skills is not systematic and coherent. The Cylch is successful in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the Welsh culture and traditions.

Teaching: Adequate

Staff have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations of all children. There is generally a good balance between child-selected and adult-led activities.

Children's behaviour is well managed and adults are good role models, both in their dealing with children and as language models. Adults use questioning well to develop children's ideas and know when to intervene in activities. Staff work very well as a team and are sensitive to children's individual needs, but the activities are not always sufficiently focused on the different abilities of the children.

Children are assessed regularly in several different ways and observations recorded. However, the system lacks coherence and needs to be refined so as to enable each child's progress to be recorded and dated. The current system does not indicate the next steps in children's learning and is consequently limited in its use in planning future activities.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The care, support and guidance provided by the Cylch is one of its major strengths. All children are met and greeted individually when they arrive and particular attention is given to any who are fretful. Children are soon engaged in activities set out for them.

The Cylch successfully fosters values such as honesty, fairness, respect and helps children to distinguish between right and wrong. All children learn to share and help one another, as for example when having their mid morning snack.

Every care is taken to ensure children's wellbeing – hand washing facilities are provided and most children need little reminding of the importance of cleanliness.

Children are well supervised when outside the Cylch and this is also facilitated by a child proof fence between the outside location and the road. Similarly, when the

weather allows children have access to a safe outside play area. The main door is kept locked so ensuring that no child can leave or adult enter unannounced. The staff are vigilant when children are being collected at lunch times. The Cylch has appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring the safety of children. There is a named person with responsibility for child protection and procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008). Staff have undergone appropriate training.

The Cylch makes good use of professional support services when necessary.

Learning environment: Good

The positive ethos is a strong feature of the Cylch and ensures that all children are free from harassment or any form of oppressive behaviour. All children, irrespective of their background have equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum. Staff know the children well and are conscious of their individual needs.

Staff are well qualified and experienced. Resources are, in the main, adequate to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase Curriculum, but will need to reflect changes as the curriculum is being developed in the future.

The accommodation is warm and spacious allowing for a wide range of activities indoors, including robust physical activities. Unfortunately this is a multipurpose hall requiring the equipment to be stored away at the end of each session, but storage facilities are adequate and within easy access. There is also an adjacent room and kitchen which is used during snack time. There are outside facilities which are used well.

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

The current leader of the Cylch took over her role in September (2010). Although the leader had previously worked at the Cylch, she was left with the task of planning and organising the Cylch as from September. In the short time she has been leader she and the deputy leader have worked hard to develop the Cylch.

The management of the Cylch display a sense of purpose and a commitment to improve. A clear direction is evident and as a team all staff display a positive ethos and a willingness to raise standards. High expectations are evident and all share values, aims and objectives focusing on providing the best possible provision for all children. This is facilitated by the very good links that have been established with the parents who are very supportive and appreciative of the Cylch.

The Cylch has a highly committed and effective management committee who have achieved a great deal recently. This has included disseminating knowledge of the Cylch in the locality resulting in more children attending and as such ensuring its financial viability. Parents have been encouraged to be involved and invited to management meetings and are circulated with information on a quarterly basis.

The management committee is very supportive of the staff and whilst staff appraisal has taken place, this is intended to be on a formal basis in future. This will also identify training requirements.

Overall, this is an effective management group that bodes well for the future development of the Cylch.

Improving quality: Good

The Cylch's self-evaluation document is detailed and itemises a clear judgemental evaluation of the current situation and the sources of evidence on which it is based. Each of the quality indicators in the inspection framework is included with additional comments where appropriate. Over the last few months the Cylch has been successful in establishing a good learning environment where children enjoy activities and made good progress. Whilst recent improvements are apparent, the Cylch has not sufficiently identified in its self-evaluation document the areas for development and the strategies to be adopted.

Partnership working: Good

Parents are very supportive of the Cylch and work well with the staff for the benefit of the children. The Cylch regularly seeks the views of parents and a clear atmosphere of trust exists between them and the staff. Parents value the "open door" policy and the ease of communication with the staff. This allows any issues or concerns to be dealt with promptly.

The Cylch benefits from the support provided by the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. This includes professional advice, the use of their policies and resources provided by the Mudiad. There are also effective links with the Local Authority Advisor staff.

Resource management: Good

Staff work together well as a team and this makes a significant impact on children's progress.

The Cylch is adequately resourced but the multi-use of the hall necessitates setting up and clearing away for each session. However, good use is made of the outside environment and overall the Cylch provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Five questionnaires were returned with the responses indicating strong support for all aspects of the Cylch. Discussion with a sample of parents during the inspection confirmed this.

Response to discussions with children

Children enjoy coming to the Cylch. They enjoy the activities and the support they receive from the staff.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	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.