

The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on: Cylch Meithrin Trelech

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Mr Eifion R Morgan

Date of inspection: 25/26th February 2010

Contract number: T/057/09N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Cylch Meithrin Trelech

Address: Canolfan Gymdeithasol Trelech, Trelech, Carmarthenshire.

Post code: SA33 6RU

Telephone: 01994 484677

Person responsible for day-to-day management: Mrs Hevina Jones

Position: Leader

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
- Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5** many important shortcomings

1.0 Context of the setting

Context of the nursery setting

Trelech is a small rural village about 10 miles from Carmarthen. The Cylch was established in the village in 1977 and has moved back to the community hall following its renovation in 2007. The location provides the Cylch with very good facilities, however, the hall, being a community facility, is used for other purposes that necessitates the Nursery's activity areas and resources being cleared away on some occasions. There is also a restriction of what can be displayed on the walls. Overall, however, it is an attractive setting for children and the staff ensure that a good range of activities is set out in readiness for the arrival of the children each morning.

The Cylch uses the large hall, kitchen and toilet facilities. The hall is approached via a small corridor that also functions as a cloakroom area and provides a notice board on which useful information for parents is displayed. The outside door is secure so ensuring that no child can leave or any adult enter unannounced. Outside is a secure yard, and storage facilities for large toys and equipment. There is no soft play area, but children have the opportunity to plant and grow seeds in season.

The Cylch is registered by the CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales) to accommodate up to 16 children. Currently there are 6 children on the register aged 3-4 years, of whom 4 are funded. Children attend following their 2nd birthday and leave for the next stage of their education in the term before their 4th birthday. The Cylch operates from 9.15 a.m. to 11.45 a.m. on four mornings of the week (not Tuesday morning), for 38 weeks of the year.

The Cylch leader is assisted by two other members of staff. All are fluent Welsh speakers and this makes a significant contribution to developing children's language.

The accommodation is very well suited to the needs of all children and to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The hall is warm, well lit and colourful, areas are designated for different activities providing children with an excellent range of activities. It is spacious and provides good space for children's activities including such activities as music and movement and dance. It is well resourced and materials and equipment are accessible to the children. Areas are demarcated to support the teaching of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There is a well-appointed kitchen where morning snacks are prepared and allows foods prepared by the children to be cooked safely.

Children attending the Cylch come from the village and the rural community. There are none from disadvantaged backgrounds. One child comes from a home where the Welsh language is spoken regularly, another from a family where one parent is Welsh speaking and the others from homes where English is the main language spoken. Children attending the Cylch benefit from Welsh medium education.

Parents are welcomed to visit the Cylch before their children attend and there is a useful booklet available for parents. Children, whatever their background, including those with additional learning needs, are welcomed to attend. No child attending at present has been identified with such needs.

The Cylch was awarded the status of Cylch Rhagorol in 2009 by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin in recognition of the quality of education it provides. The Cylch also receives valuable support from the Early Years Partnership and Child Care staff of the local Education Authority. Numerous organisations have financially supported the Cylch including the local community.

The Cylch was inspected by the CSSIW in 2009 and by Estyn in 2003. All recommendations have been addressed.

The management committee are active in supporting the Cylch, they meet termly and more often if necessary.

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the seven areas of learning

Six areas of learning	Grade for under-fives
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity	1
Language, literacy and communication skills	2
Mathematical development	1
Welsh language development	N/A
Knowledge and understanding of the world	1
Physical development	1
Creative development	1

2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

Quality of education	Grade for under-fives
Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
Quality of planning for children's learning	1
Quality of teaching	1
Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reports for parents and carers	2
Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community	1
The contribution made by the setting to children's well-being	1
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	1
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	1

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds.

3.1 Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

All children are very confident and form relationships easily with other children and adults. They are sensitive to the needs of others and show respect and affection for each other. All children behave very well in all situations, they take turns, share and exercise very good self-control relative to their age.

Good features

All children have a good level of independence and the confidence to choose activities that interest them. They work happily in pairs or individually for significant amounts of time and seek help when necessary. They show a good degree of self-control and respond positively to adults. All children enjoy new learning experiences, such as computer activities. All children are beginning to take responsibility for personal hygiene and play safely.

All children have a good basic understanding of the traditions and celebrations of some Welsh customs reinforced by celebrations, such as St. David's Day, by taking part in local eisteddfod and "twmpath dancing". They celebrate Christian festivals including Christmas and Easter and are also becoming aware of other cultures

including celebrations associated with the Chinese New Year and the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

All children listen very well and respond positively to adults. Children's understanding of the Welsh language is variable and depends largely on their background. Overall, most children understand more words than they can speak. All children enjoy stories and are able to repeat familiar words spoken by an adult and words in Welsh songs and rhymes.

All children show an interest in books – most enjoy looking at books and handle them as a reader. Children know that words have meaning and carry information as was apparent when one child responded to a letter sent to the class.

All children enjoy mark-making experiences using chalk or felt tip pens. They know the functions of writing.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but children's learning would be improved by focusing on the next steps in their language development.

3.3 Mathematical development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Most children count purposefully and correctly to five and some to 10. They recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as diamond shapes, and have an awareness of the purpose of money.

Good features

All children respond to and join in familiar numerical rhymes and songs. They have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary, such as "more", or "less", "too much" and "too little". Most children recognise basic pattern and can match shapes, such as in jigsaws. They can match pairs of objects, such as when matching pairs of shoes. In classroom activities they count familiar objects, such as vegetables and can sequence familiar objects.

Many children are beginning to recognise basic numbers when written and sequence them to 3. Most children are beginning to measure and to appreciate the important of weighing foods, as when following a recipe.

3.4 Welsh language development

Not applicable

3.5 Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

All children have a good understanding of the idea of “change”. Through practical experience they know that foods change when mixed and cooked. They also know, through their activities that snow melts to water. Children have examined a very good range of materials both living (such as small animals) and non-living and dead materials (such as sea-shells and rocks on display in their classroom). They have used a magnifying glass in their observations.

Good features

All children have planted seeds and observe the growth of seedlings. They know that seedlings need suitable conditions for growth and have to be looked after. They recognise and name some common vegetables and fruit and have a good understanding of healthy eating.

All children have a good basic understanding of the weather and can describe the daily weather. They know that winter is cold and that birds benefit from being provided with food. Children have mixed food for birds. They know that young animals, such as lambs, need to be cared for and fed.

Visits to the local woodland enabled children to examine leaves and small animals at first hand. They know that leaves change colour in autumn and some seeds float in the air. Such visits also enable children to become more environmentally aware. They also know that opaque objects, such as leaves cast a shadow when light is shone on them.

3.6 Physical development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

All children use large equipment such as tricycles and toy cars confidently and very competently making good use of space. They handle small tools, such as pencils, crayons, chalk and scissors with increasing control. All children show very good hand-eye co-ordination and the ability to play independently or to share resources with a friend.

Good features

All children use space well and have a good awareness of each other when undertaking different ways of moving. They co-operate well and have basic understanding of different ways of moving, including walking, jumping and hopping.

All children listen to instructions and respond promptly such as when partaking in music and movement activities. All children have good handling skills, such as when using building blocks and co-operate well with each other.

3.7 Creative development**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features****Outstanding features**

All children enjoy role-play and imaginative drama and most undertake such activities from choice. They enjoy role-playing with each other and appreciate the work of others.

All pupils have very good creative skills and select paints and materials they need for their images.

Good features

All children use a good range of materials, making choices, mixing paints, arranging and combining materials to create their own images, such as when making Christmas cards. The children are capable of making three-dimensional artefacts such as models depicting hedgehogs. They also use and model clay to depict animals, such as hedgehogs, and different shapes.

All children enjoy making music using percussion instruments and are beginning to appreciate rhythm. They sing tunefully and enjoy music and movement activities.

4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds.

4.1 The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

All children, without exception, show affection for each other and are respectful of each other's needs. Children's personal and social skills are very effectively promoted, as are children's cultural development and wellbeing. There is a very good emphasis on developing the Welsh language and the cultural traditions of Wales.

Good features

The setting has clear aims and values that are fully realised in practice. All children respect each other and there is equality of opportunity for all. Children are well behaved and respond promptly to the staff.

The Welsh language development is well facilitated by staff who are first language Welsh speakers, so that the language of all children whatever their linguistic background is well developed.

Children's spiritual development is supported by appreciation of their locality through visits to the locality such as the nearby woodland and highlighted by collections for those less fortunate than themselves. Prayers before morning snacks reinforce these beliefs.

Children find the focused tasks exciting and in one instance the "Wow" factor was obvious when children began weighing their ingredients in a cooking exercise.

Morally, children are being provided with a strong behavioural framework that highlights honesty, fair play and a clear understand of right and wrong.

The Cylch perpetuates a strong sense of community incorporating visitors from the community, parents and carers and people who help them. This helps to develop children's sense of belonging and self-image and wellbeing.

4.2 The quality of planning for children's learning

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

The curriculum is very well planned to meet the needs of all children and to provide them with continuity and progression in their learning. The Cylch is very well resourced, resources are accessible to children and this, together with the very good child/adult ratio, ensures an emphasis on child-led activities. This also allows the staff excellent opportunities to develop children's Welsh vocabulary.

Good features

Planning is firmly based on the Framework for Children's Learning and provides children with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Planning is based on a whole-setting approach and all staff are involved. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig and cultural diversity are prominently represented in the curriculum.

The planning is comprehensive though not over bureaucratic and indicates clearly on a day-to-day basis the focus of the teaching. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities and all children have good opportunities for choosing their own activities. There are opportunities for enhanced provision and focused tasks.

4.3 The quality of teaching

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Staff provide stimulating, challenging and exciting opportunities for all children and through their involvement and enthusiasm ensure the full participation and enjoyment of all children. The Nursery is a positive learning environment where children feel safe and secure.

Good features

All staff work very well together as a team to support children's progress and achievements. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of the Foundation Phase framework for children's learning. They have high expectations for children's progress and attainment and these are realised in practice.

The staff have a very good relationship with parents and carers. They know the children well and are sensitive to their needs. Children value and respect the staff and approach them confidently.

The curriculum is managed and organised effectively to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the six areas of learning.

The teaching is well focused on equality of opportunity and respect for diversity and provides for children to learn through play and active involvement. Resources are well used to support the teaching.

The teaching ensures a good balance and a notable and good feature is the ability of staff to appreciate when to intervene and when not to intervene in children's activities. Questioning is used very well to develop children's thinking skills and to develop their language.

4.4 The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

There is a good whole-setting strategy for assessing children's achievement and progress. Assessment procedures are reliable and children are regularly assessed during their activities. These records are then incorporated into each child's record file. The very favourable child/adult ratio enables adults to discuss with children what they are doing and through the good use of questioning to probe their understanding. This also enables the staff to be aware of the next steps in children's learning.

The staff meet parents and carers when children arrive in the morning and when they leave and discussions at these times keeps parents and carers aware of children's progress. There is also an end of term report for parents based on what children have achieved in the 6 areas of learning. This ensures that parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but whilst the next steps in children's learning are identified, they are not always highlighted in the planning.

4.5 The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Relationships with parents and carers and with the community are excellent. Discussion with parents during the inspection and analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaire, confirms this. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's progress through regular discussion and the end of term reports.

Good features

Parents visit the Cylch with their children prior to the children attending on a regular basis. There is a useful and informative booklet that describes the activities and provides parents and carers with administrative details. The Cylch also organises activities to which parents and children are invited. In this rural community parents take the opportunity for informal meetings when they bring and collect their children.

Notices including policies and the theme planned for the term are prominently displayed in the entrance hall. The Cylch's policies are based on those provided by the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. Complaints procedures are in place but they have not been used.

The Cylch makes good use of the community and the locality. Children make regular visits to the adjacent woodland. They have also made regular visits to the Post Office (until it closed!). Visitors from the community such as to introduce "dawnsio gwerin" have enhanced children's learning.

4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

The general ethos and the care and support children receive are excellent. Children display a feeling of calm and contentment and exude confidence when tackling new experiences. All children display eager anticipation of what is in store for them when they arrive each morning.

Good features

The Cylch has clear policies and procedures to safeguard children and these are evident in practice. The leader is the designated co-ordinator but all staff work together very well for the benefit of the children. All have received appropriate training.

Good security arrangements are in place – the Cylch is secure and no child can leave or adult enter unannounced. The recently erected security fence makes the outside play area secure.

Children are very well supervised at all times and the very good relationships that are evident between children and children and adults ensure the complete lack of any form of harassment or antisocial behaviour.

There are clearly laid out procedures to ensure safe conduct on outings and clear procedures for dealing with accidents and known to all the staff. The leader and her assistant have received training and have a First Aid Certificate.

The Cylch provides children with healthy and nutritious snacks and these are good social occasions. There are plenty of opportunities for strenuous physical activities both indoors and outdoors in the yard.

4.7 The quality of the leadership and management of the setting

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

The Cylch has recently developed an effective self-evaluation procedure that itemises clearly the strengths and shortcomings in the provision. It has been discussed and agreed with the staff and management committee and clearly itemises targets, success criteria, dates and persons responsible for overseeing improvements.

Good features

The Cylch staff work together very well as a team under the direction of the leader. Staff know their responsibilities and all work for the benefit of the children. They know their children well and are sensitive to their needs.

Staff have undergone regular and relevant training. Self-evaluation is ongoing and this has impacted well on the overall provision. Very good working relationships are apparent with local partnerships and the community.

The Cylch has benefited from the expertise provided by the Early Years Development & Child Care Partnership and the support of the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

Financially the Cylch has also benefited substantially from support of local organisations such as the pound for pounds scheme offered by a local bank. The Local Authority, through charity organisations and the local community have also contributed.

Very good relationships exist with the local adjacent primary school. Resources and the accommodation are well used. Overall, it is a pity that more children do not take advantage of the provision provided by the Cylch.

4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report

The Cylch has successfully addressed the key issues highlighted in the previous Estyn inspection report.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

- R1 continue to provide the high quality of provision that is apparent at present;
- R2 to develop the outside environment so as to provide stimulating experiences for children:
- R3 to use the assessment information to plan the next step in children's learning.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples' Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.