



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 yr Wyddgrug
The Clubhouse
Park Avenue
Mold
Denbighshire
CH7 1RY**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

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**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 school'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 yr Wyddgrug is located in a community centre in Mold, North Wales. It makes use of a large hall with an adjacent kitchen and toilet facilities. It is approached via a hallway that provides notice board space to give parents information about the Cylch.

The Cylch moved to its present location in September 2010 having previously been located in a chapel building in Mold. This, together with changes in support staff, represent significant recent changes. The Cylch is a Welsh medium setting affiliated to the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. It is registered to accommodate up to 32 children. At present there are 30 on the register, 14 are three years old and all are funded. Children attend the Cylch from aged 2½ years and begin the next stage of their education in the September following their third birthday. The Cylch opens for 4 mornings of the week (not Thursday), from 9.15 – 11.15 during school term times.

The Cylch is located in a residential part of Mold and close to a community first area. In the main, the area is neither socio-economically advantaged or disadvantaged, but a few children live in the area designated as community first area. There is no child currently from an ethnic minority background and practically all children come from English speaking homes. The Cylch reports that many parents are making commendable efforts to learn the Welsh language. In some instances one parent may be Welsh speaking. The Cylch has welcomed children with additional learning needs (ALN), and these, in the past, have been well supported receiving 1:1 support and receiving help by outside agencies. No child currently attending the Cylch is recognised as having ALN, however, the staff are always vigilant. The Cylch benefits substantially from the support it receives from the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

The Cylch has been recognised by the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin as a “Cylch Rhagorol”. The Cylch was most recently inspected by CSSIW in July 2009. There were no major recommendations. It has not been inspected by CSSIW in the present location. It has not been previously inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

- All children achieve well and make good progress relative to their starting point.
- All children's competence in the Welsh language is developing well in relation to their background.
- All children have a good attitude and behave well.
- Most children have a developing understanding of how to keep healthy and all feel safe.
- All children enjoy their time at the Cylch and form good relationships.
- The provision for developing children's Welsh language is good.
- Adults have high expectations of children and these are realised in practice.
- The Cylch makes very good provision for children's health and wellbeing.
- The Cylch has a good ethos that promotes equality of opportunity.
- Staff work together well for the benefit of the children.

Prospects for improvement

- The Cylch has a good track record of improvement as it has moved locations.
- Staff are committed to providing the best possible provision for the children.
- Plans are in place for further improvement and these are realistic.
- The leadership is receptive to advice and the Cylch has benefited from such advice in the past.
- Parents are very supportive of the Cylch.

Recommendations

1. Review curriculum planning so that the teaching and learning builds systematically on children's knowledge, understanding and skills.
2. Refine assessment procedures so as to identify children's skill development and the next stage in their learning and to use this information in planning.
3. Extend the leadership role to further support new staff.
4. Develop and equip the outside area so as to extend children's experiences.

What happens next?

The Cylch will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the Cylch's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children achieve good standards and make realistic progress in all areas of learning from their starting point. Children work diligently and are fully engaged in their tasks. They have the self-confidence to make choices, they concentrate and persevere well on their tasks.

All children have good communication skills. They listen well and are keen to answer questions. They have a good vocabulary. Children enjoy looking at books and most hold them correctly. All children are beginning to develop their writing skills. A good and significant aspect of children's communication skills is their developing competence in the Welsh language. They understand more words than they can speak but understand and respond to instructions and commands in the Welsh language. Many children repeat familiar Welsh words and phrases and all join in Welsh action songs and rhymes. Overall, this is good progress considering children's backgrounds.

All children are developing their mathematical competence – they use mathematical language, such as full and empty, and most children match, count and sort objects.

Children's information and communication technology skills are developing through computer games and the use of a programmable toy. (Beebot).

Overall, children's basic and key skills in other curricular areas are good, including their creative and physical skills.

Wellbeing: Good

All children have an appropriate understanding of how to keep healthy recognising healthy foods and partaking in robust physical activities. Children show in their manner that they feel safe and relaxed in the Cylch.

All children show commendable interest in the activities set out for them and rarely, if ever, was a child seen to be unoccupied. Children display good attitudes, are well behaved and respect each other and the staff.

All children, in the main, are happy to select their activities and are happy to work collaboratively.

The Cylch functions well as a community where children co-operate well and are capable of making decisions about life in the Cylch.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Adequate.

All children are actively involved in the activities set out for them and learning experiences are, in the main, well directed at meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. However, planning does not provide sufficient information to support all staff so as to ensure a curriculum that builds systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Activities are well designed to enable children to form good relationships and to become confident, independent learners. The development of children's physical and creative skills are well emphasised and children understand the need to care for living things.

All staff exploit opportunities to develop children's skills, particularly their linguistic skills. Good opportunities are provided for staff to work with groups of children, questioning and discussing their work, so as to develop their thinking skills. Planning however, does not focus sufficiently on a coherent development of skills across all areas of learning.

The Welsh dimension is emphasised well. Children, through celebrations of, for example St. David's day, are acquiring an understanding of the traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales. Children's knowledge of culture and traditions of other peoples of the world is less well developed.

Teaching: Good

Staff understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase and senior staff have up-to-date knowledge of child development. There are high expectations of all children and these are largely realised in practice.

There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed activities and through the active support of the staff children's needs are managed flexibly. Staff are very good language models and this has a significant effect on children's language development. The children are immersed in the Welsh language and this is proving to be successful in developing their language skills. Through dialogue and questions children are well challenged particularly in the use of the language. Staff intervene appropriately in children's activities and know their roles, if somewhat less clear as to the particular and individual children's skill development.

All children are regularly assessed and the observations recorded on children's individual record books. These records are a good measure of children's progress in the Foundation Phase areas of learning. In instances these recordings are objective and detailed and this facilitates the teaching to focus on the next steps in children's learning. In some instances however, the recordings are too descriptive and general.

Parents report that they are well aware of their child's progress and what they can do to help them improve, particularly in terms of their language development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for developing and ensuring children's health and wellbeing including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The day-to-day working and activities of the Cylch provide children with a good behavioural framework. Values such as honesty, fairness, respect and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong are very well developed. Children are shown respect and this is reciprocated, children take and accept responsibility and show initiative. Children are aware of those in the community who look after them, such as fire-fighters and the police.

The Cylch is well able to accept and support children with additional learning needs (ALN) and good use is made of professional services to support such individuals. These children have had full access to all areas of learning and parents are always fully involved.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Policies and procedures are in place and the leader is the senior member of staff with responsibility for dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues. Procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. Staff have had appropriate training.

Learning environment: Good

The Cylch is inclusive and has a happy, positive ethos. Staff know the children well and respond to their particular needs. All children have equal access to the curriculum and enjoy a good range of activities. A tolerant attitude pervades the Cylch and children are free of any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. Whilst no children have been identified in the current cohort as having any form of disability, the staff are sensitive to the need to be vigilant. No child would be at a disadvantage if requiring additional learning needs and the Cylch is well suited to cope with children with physical disability.

A complaints procedure is in place though no complaints have been received.

There are sufficient staff employed with occasional help as well from parents who are on the management committee. Staff are appropriately qualified and the two established staff have a long experience of working with children. Two new members of staff have recently been appointed.

Resources are sufficient and suitable to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the needs of the children.

The Cylch has use of a large hall which is set out with activity areas reflecting the philosophy of the Foundation Phase targets for children's learning. It suffers because of the multiuse of the hall necessitating the clearing away of resources at the end of each session.

The accommodation offers good space and is used effectively. There is no suitable outside area for the children to use to extend their learning.

The Cylch, however, has plans in place to develop an outside area to extend children's experiences. The Cylch uses the local environment to enhance the existing facilities.

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

Over recent years the leadership has successfully coped with the inherent difficulties of moving the Cylch and acquiring suitably resourced provision for the children. This has been successfully achieved. At the same time well established staff have been lost. This disrupted what was a team with experience of working together and utilising each other's strengths, shared values and a group that contributed to strategic planning.

Currently the leadership does not provide sufficient guidance and structure for each session to allow all staff to be fully aware of their roles and to maximise children's learning opportunities. While activities are well focused on the Foundation Phase outcomes, planning is insufficiently detailed and roles not well defined so as to ensure a good pace and a well established routine. There is no clear direction to the work and individual sessions can lose a sense of purpose.

The management committee is supportive of the Cylch and several are actively involved in day-to-day activities. These are valuable contributions. The change in personnel each year, however, mitigates against continuity from year to year and each year a new management committee has to familiarise itself with their workings of the Cylch, its aims and objectives.

Improving quality: Good

The leadership is coming to terms with the new setting. Strengths and areas for development have been recognised and plans are in place to bring about improvement. A positive culture pervades the Cylch and self-evaluation is firmly based on improving the provision for the children. The leaders have shown that they are capable of improving provision and making the best use of professional advice.

Partnership working: Good

Parents are very supportive of the Cylch and are particularly appreciative of the progress their children are making in acquiring the Welsh language. They also appreciated the way the Cylch develops children's personal and social skills. Staff are always available for informal discussions and parents appreciate this very much.

The Cylch has strong links with the Welsh medium primary school that virtually all the children attend. This facilitates the transfer of children. A good, positive relationship with the local authority advisory teacher enhances the work of the Cylch and good

links exist with relevant specialists. Community links are used effectively to support children's learning.

Resource management: Good

Resources are well managed although circumstances require them to be stored away at the end of each session. However, staff ensure that each session they are deployed effectively to support the learning. The purchase of resources is linked directly to the requirements of the teaching.

Overall, the Cylch gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Only one questionnaire reply was received by the date indicated. This was wholly favourable.

Discussion with parents and carers during the inspection confirmed parent's full support for the Cylch and indicated their satisfaction with the progress children were making, particularly in acquiring the Welsh language and in their personal development. Parents were satisfied with the information they had from the Cylch regarding their children and also appreciated the contact they had with the staff.

Responses to discussions with children

All children are happy at the Cylch and all participate eagerly in all activities set out for them. Children, in conversation, spoke about the enjoyment they have, particularly when playing with their friends.

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)