



*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 Corris  
Y Caban  
Ysgol Gynradd Dyffryn Dulas  
Corris  
Machynlleth  
Powys  
SY20 9TQ**

**Date of inspection: February 2013**

**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:

<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 Corris dates back to September 1972 and celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year. The Cylch meets in a purpose built cabin in the grounds of the “Ysgol Gynradd Dyffryn Dulas” in the village of Corris. Corris is a small rural village located some 6 miles north of Machynlleth on the A487 road to Dolgellau.

Children attending the Cylch come from a wide rural community encompassing the villages of Tal-y-Llyn, Aberllefenni, Bont-ar-Ddyfi and Pennal. This is a rural community but not agricultural with most children living in small villages.

Families are largely English speaking comprising a large number of families who have moved into the area. Consequently most of the children attending the Cylch are from English speaking backgrounds. None are regarded as from disadvantaged homes.

The Cylch is registered by the Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSW) to accommodate a maximum of 18 children in any session. Currently there are 16 children on the register. Three children are aged 3 years and funded. The Cylch operates on three days of the week on Tuesday 8.45 a.m. to 11.45 a.m., Wednesday 11.15 a.m. - 1.15 p.m. and 1.15 p.m. – 3.15 p.m., and on Thursday 8.45 a.m. – 11.45 a.m. The times are to accommodate the wishes of parents.

Children begin at the Cylch once they are 2½ years old and attend the local primary school on a part time basis from the September following their third birthday (and attend the Cylch on Wednesday afternoon) and full time in September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Some of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds – usually one parent. None have been identified as having additional learning needs, although the Cylch is able to accommodate such children. The Cylch receives an Early Years Grant from the Local Authority.

The Cylch was inspected by CSSIW in 2012 and by Estyn in 2006. Since the last Estyn inspection, the Cylch has located to the portacabin.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Cylch Meithrin Corris is a good setting because:

- all children make good progress;
- all children are well cared for and supported;
- children have broad and interesting learning experiences;
- of the provision for developing the Welsh language;
- of the good learning environment, including out of door facilities;
- of the good leadership and management;
- the partnership with parents is well established.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- all staff work together for the benefit of the children;
- of the track record of bringing about improvement;
- the openness of staff to change;
- the support provided by the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin.

## Recommendations

- R1. continue to provide good quality education for the children.
- R2. assess children in terms of the skill development.
- R3. provide more differentiated tasks for the different ability children.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

**Good**

#### Learning experiences: **Good**

Practitioners plan collaboratively and produce a curriculum and learning activities that captures the interest of all the children, whatever their age or ability. Learning experiences build on children's interests and provides them with innovating activities. Learning experiences are well designed to enable children to progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. Children's learning builds on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Day-to-day activities are very varied and enable children to form relationships through working together in small groups involving the staff in a supporting role. Children respect each other and are well respected by adults. The homely, supportive ethos prevalent in the Cylch successfully develops children's self-confidence enabling them to become independent learners and to pursue their own interests.

Learning experiences provide children with very good opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills both through activities indoors and outdoors. Children also grow bulbs and seeds and look after growing plants. Recycling is well established and children are beginning to understand the importance of sustainable development. Children are acquiring skills that will enable them to become competent learners. Opportunities are provided for them to develop their thinking skills and staff use questioning well to encourage children's participation.

The Cylch is very active in providing opportunities for children to learn the Welsh language. Children are immersed in the language as Welsh is the language of instructions and communication. The traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales are given prominence, such as celebrating St. David's Day.

## **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a very good understanding of child development through their experience and professional development courses. They understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Staff have high expectations of all children whatever their background or ability. Staff are also aware of when to let children work independently but sensitive to when children need help. The Cylch successfully challenges children and provides a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed activities. Staff are good role models, and use questioning well to develop children's thinking. This is a well organised, calm community where children's behaviour is of a high order. All practitioners are involved in planning and they work well as a team for the benefit of the children.

Children are regularly assessed and observations recorded. This is a good measure of children's progress. Staff, in this small setting, are well aware of children's ability and use their knowledge to develop children's thinking. Overall, however, assessment does not always focus on children's achievement in terms of their skills, and activities are not focused sufficiently on the next steps in individual children's learning. In these instances activities are not always sufficiently differentiated to challenge all children, whatever their ability.

Parents report that they are well aware of their children's progress and what they can do to help them improve.

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

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

All children have a positive attitude to learning and show very good behaviour. The day-to-day activities successfully foster values such as honesty, respect and fairplay. Children understand the difference between right and wrong and act accordingly. All children accept responsibility taking turns to help with snack times. Rules of behaviour are well established and children show tolerance and increasing maturity. Children are an integral part of the Cylch and benefit from its homely, supportive ethos.

The Cylch has good links with Social Services and specialist agencies. Children with additional learning needs have been well supported in the past. No child currently at the Cylch has been identified as having such needs.

The Cylch has appropriate policies and procedures in place in respect of safeguarding children. The leader is the senior member of staff with responsibility for

dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues. All staff have received recent and relevant training.

Procedures are in place to reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

**Learning environment: Good**

The Cylch provides children with a safe, supportive environment where each child is valued and respected. Overall, the setting is fully inclusive, giving each child equal access to all activities. A tolerant attitude prevails and this ensures that all children (and staff) are free from any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour.

The setting is well able to provide good facilities for any child with a physical disability, (as it has in the past).

The setting takes good account of feedback from parents. A complaints procedure is in place but has not been used.

The Cylch is generously staffed. All staff have relevant and appropriate qualifications and have substantial experience of working with young children. The Cylch is well resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the specific needs of the children.

The accommodation is effectively used. The teaching room is well differentiated into activity areas in keeping with the Foundation Phase philosophy. The outside is immediately accessible to the children and provides for an attractive learning environment. An "eco-house" or "story-house" is an interesting addition to the good range of resources available to the children. Overall, the outside environment enhances the facilities at the setting.

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

The leadership provides the Cylch with a clear sense of direction and a sense of purpose, focused on providing the very best learning experiences for the children. The staff work together very well as a team and share common values, aims and objectives. All are involved in strategic planning and have high expectations of the children. Staff know their roles and responsibilities and are always active in supporting the children. A positive ethos pervades the Cylch.

When necessary induction is used to introduce staff to the workings of the Cylch but the current staff have worked together for some time. Appraisal is undertaken regularly.

There are very good links with parents who are encouraged to support their children's learning, particularly in the development of the Welsh language.

The management committee understand their roles and are well informed about the performance of the Cylch. They fulfil their legal duties.

The Cylch has addressed both National and local priorities such as implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The Cylch has been active in improving the quality of provision over the last few years since moving to their new accommodation. Financial support has been well used to develop a setting that is both attractive and well resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. As opportunities arose, the setting has prioritised areas for development, and made the best use of resources.

The current self-evaluation document identifies strengths and areas for development. Areas for development are prioritised and strategies for improvement identified and are well focused on ensuring positive gains for the children.

All practitioners have taken advantage of professional training courses and these have impacted well on children's learning and wellbeing.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Worthwhile and close links have been established with parents based on trust and ease of communication. Good links are in place with the transfer primary school and this facilitates the transfer of the children. Three year olds in school or a part-time basis return to the Cylch on an afternoon each week.

The setting benefits from the support and advice provided by the Local Authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin.

### **Resource management: Good**

The Cylch is well resourced both indoors and outside. Resources are easily accessible for the children and are well designed to enable the children to develop their skills and to achieve the perceived Foundation Phase outcomes.

The out-of-doors provides children with a range of raised beds for growing plants, areas for physical play and a grassed area. An "eco-house" or "story house" is an attractive addition. Children can sit in the wooden building sheltered from the

elements be it rain or sun. Facilities are well used to develop children's skills across all areas of learning.

The Cylch provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Parents responses:

Twelve questionnaire replies were received. Parents and carers were asked to reply to 16 statements, noting one of five categories of reply – “strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and don’t know”.

The replies can be summarised as follows:

More than three-quarters of the responses “strongly agree” that

*Overall I am satisfied with the setting.*

*My child likes this setting.*

*My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.*

*My child is making good progress at the setting.*

*Children behave well in the setting.*

*Teaching is good.*

*Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.*

*My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.*

*My child is safe at the setting.*

*I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.*

*My child is well prepared for moving on to school.*

*The setting is well run.*

More than half “strongly agree” that

*My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.*

*I am kept well informed about my child’s progress.*

*I understand the setting’s procedure for dealing with complaints.*

*There is a good range of activities including trips or visits,*

No respondent “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with any of the statements.

Eight parents also took the opportunity to make comments.

All were very positive and can be summarised as follows:

- *How happy children are to attend.*
- *How well run the setting is.*
- *The contribution of the staff in caring for the children.*
- *The stimulating work provided for the children.*
- *The Cylch’s excellence in every respect.*

- *The healthy snacks provided for the children.*
- *No complaints – excellent facility.*
- *Staff are wonderful.*

### Children

Children spoke of how they enjoy coming to the Cylch - would like to come every day. Enjoyed 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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## 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>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.