



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 Porth Tywyn
Neuadd Gofa,
Stryd Parc y Minos
Porth Tywyn
Carmarthenshire
SA16 0BN**

Date of inspection: February 2013

by

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 Porth Tywyn is a Welsh medium nursery that meets in the Memorial Hall and Institute near the centre of the small harbour town of Burry Port. The town is some 5 miles to the west of Llanelli. The Cylch was established in 1975 and the present leader has been in post since 2011.

The children attending the Cylch come from Burry Port and the neighbouring village of Pwll. The social and economic background of the area is variable with some children from disadvantaged homes. The majority of children come from homes where the Welsh language is not the main language of communication. There is no child registered at the Cylch from a minority ethnic background, whilst two children have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and are receiving additional support.

The Cylch is open for 41 weeks a year, both mornings (9 – 11.50 a.m.) and afternoon (1 – 3 p.m.) Children are admitted following their second birthday and proceed to the next stage of their education in the term that they achieve their 4th birthday. Currently there are 42 children on the register, 20 of whom are 3 year olds and all are funded. The Cylch is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate a maximum of 24 children in any session. The majority of children leaving the Cylch transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Parc y Tywyn, and the others to the English medium Burry Port Infants school.

The Cylch has the use of one room in the Memorial Hall and Institute building. Parents and Carers approach this building through the outer gates and hallway. A small table in the hallway displays useful information for parents and carers, mainly to do with Welsh medium Nursery education. The door to the Cylch's room is secure so no one can enter or leave unannounced. The teaching room is spacious and the walls used to display children's work, topics studied and daily planning. The room is suitably differentiated into activity areas in keeping with the philosophy of the Foundation Phase. The room is also used by other organisations and this necessitates some clearing away at the end of the day. However, this disruption is fairly minimal since the organisations using the room are sympathetic to the work of the Cylch and in reality cause little disruption. Children also use the outside grassed area when taken outside by the staff. The general layout does not allow for free access of children in the Cylch to this area.

The setting is generously staffed. There are six members of staff who attend at different times for the sessions, depending on the number of children attending. Staff are well qualified to supervise children of this age. All have attended relevant courses related to the education and care of young children. Four members of staff are Welsh speakers and the others are currently attending Welsh language learning courses.

The Cylch is supported by an active management committee who meet termly or more often as the occasion demands. The Cylch also receives valuable support from the Mudiad Meithrin who granted it the status of "Cylch Rhagorol" in 2012.

Particularly good support has been provided by the Local Authority support teacher who has guided the development of the Cylch over the last two years.

The Cylch was inspected by the CSSIW in 2012. There were no recommendations. An Estyn inspection took place in 2007 and all recommendations have been addressed.

Summary

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

Current performance

Cylch Methrin Porth Tywyn is a good setting because:

- all children achieve good standards and progress well during their time in the Cylch.;
- children's health and wellbeing is well supported;
- children have good learning experiences;
- the safeguarding arrangements ensure that children are well cared for and supported;
- leadership is effective and there is a good team spirit evident amongst the staff;
- of the support provided by the local authority support teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin.

Prospects for improvement

The Cylch Meithrin capacity to improve is good because:

- the local authority support teacher provides the Cylch with very good support;
- the leader and staff are firmly committed to improve the provision for children;
- the track record of improvement over the last two years.

Recommendations

R1. Refine its assessment procedures so as to note individual children's achievements, particularly their skills and to identify the next steps in children's learning.

R2. Use the assessment results in planning so that the learning experiences are well matched to children's ability and to provide them with challenging work.

R3. Produce a development plan based on the self-evaluation report, prioritise issues for improvement and how they are to be achieved and evaluated.

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?

Good

Standards: Good

All children progress well in all areas of learning from their various starting point and achieve good standards. Children of all abilities have the self-confidence to choose activities and are actively engaged in tasks set out for them. Many are capable of persevering for significant periods of time.

All children can make themselves understood and whilst more confident in the English language, all are developing their Welsh competence to different degrees. Children understand basic instructions in Welsh and from their response it is obvious that they understand more words than they can speak. All children respond positively to questions asked by adults and a particular feature is their competence and willingness to sing Welsh songs and rhymes. Many children respond enthusiastically to Welsh stories and enjoy looking at Welsh books.

Children's key skills are developing well across a wide curriculum. They express themselves with increasing confidence as they mature and at best answer questions posed by adults in Welsh, such as during morning and afternoon registration. They recognise their names on name tags and respond to personal questions. Very good opportunities are provided for children to look at books. The reading corner is a comfortable and popular location when children handle books appropriately. The older and more able children can identify and name familiar characters in Welsh stories. These more able children understand some of the functions of writing, such as making a list of their requirements. All children are experimenting with mark-making.

All children have access to a computer and many are able to handle the computer mouse and icons to produce coloured shapes on the screen. Children were seen using digital cameras, role playing with mobile phones and have experience of programming their Bee-Bot.

Overall, children achieve well and partake in activities that strengthen and develop their learning.

Wellbeing: Good

All children show interest in tasks and activities set out for them. They show their enjoyment of attending the Cylch by their enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning.

Children are considerate and many show concern for one another. They relate well to one another and to adults. A notable feature is the interest children show for looking at books and to listen to stories read to them.

Children are becoming increasingly aware of how to keep healthy, such as washing their hands before eating. They enjoy physical activity and their self-confidence shows that they feel safe in the Cylch. They are treated with respect and in return they respect adults working in the Cylch.

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

The planned activities successfully engage all children and takes good account of the skills children need to access the full curriculum and to progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. Good account is taken of children's interests and this helps to keep the children actively involved. Planning is done collaboratively and makes the best use of the expertise of the staff.

Planning is based around selected themes and incorporates skills to be developed. In the main, the curriculum builds on existing knowledge, understanding and skills through the use of focused tasks that take into account children's different abilities and achievements. Learning activities encourage children to work together, to co-operate and form good relationships. They treat each other with respect and are tolerant. Day-to-day activities help children to develop their self-confidence and to become independent learners.

Planning allows for sufficient opportunities for developing children's creative skills and visits to the locality give children a good insight and an understanding of their community.

Planning for the development of the Welsh language is based on the philosophy of immersing the children in the language. Staff converse with the children in Welsh and encourage them to use the language as much as possible. The Welsh dimension is developed through activities based around Welsh celebrations including St. David's Day and Santes Dwynwen.

The Cylch collects waste paper but children's ideas about sustainability and recycling are currently underdeveloped. Children's ideas about their role in the community are well developed through visits to the locality and visitors who visit the Cylch.

Teaching: Good

Staff are experienced and have an up-to-date knowledge of child development. All have attended recent and relevant courses and have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Children with additional learning needs (ALN) are well supported and provision is made to support children of differing abilities during focused task activities.

A good balance exists between child-selected and adult-directed or led activities. Staff working with small groups of children, manage them well and they respond flexibly to children's needs and take into account children's ability and prior attainment.

Staff are good language role models and as such, highlighting to children the Welsh language as a living language. Staff also use praise well to encourage children's participation and to use the Welsh language. Staff are actively involved in planning and are well briefed about their roles. They support each other well and work well as a team for the benefit of the children. Staff assess children regularly during focused tasks, during activities of enhanced provision and during free play. These observations are recorded in individual children's record files. This is a good record of individual children's progress. Children's achievements and interests give a good basis for planning future activities. However, records of achievement tend to be descriptive and are insufficiently focused on individual children's achievement, especially their skills. The next steps in children's learning are not clearly identified in the planning and consequently tasks are not always well matched to children's ability and to provide them with challenging activities.

Parents and carers were aware of their child's progress but were not fully aware of what they could do to help their children to 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.

Day-to-day activities successfully foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect for each other. All children know the difference between right and wrong and act accordingly. Children's developing self-confidence helps them to become independent learners and to take responsibility. Children are encouraged to be part of and to help with the general organisation of the Cylch. They help with washing dishes, clearing away and preparing for snack time.

Parents respect and trust the Cylch to do the best for their children. Specialist services are used when necessary and children have and do benefit from professional support. Currently children identified with additional learning needs receive 1:1 support.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place with respect of safeguarding children. The Cylch leader is the named responsible person overseeing child protection and safeguarding issues. All staff have received recent and relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities. Policies are updated regularly. Procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

The setting offers children identified with additional learning needs (ALN) full access to all areas of learning. Children's progress is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents. Where necessary, children receive 1:1 support and everyone has an individual educational plan in which targets and specific needs are identified. Professional support is provided when necessary. Overall, quality support is provided for children with educational, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Learning environment: Good

The Cylch has a fully inclusive ethos and all children are welcomed whatever their background. All have equal access to the curriculum and partake in all activities, including visits to the community.

Children enjoy an environment free from any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour.

The Cylch is generously staffed. All have relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children. There are sufficient resources to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The reading corner is a comfortable location with a good supply of Welsh story books. All children enjoy this facility. The role play area is also an attractive interesting provision that enhances children's learning. Overall, good use is made of the accommodation and provides children with an attractive learning environment.

Children do not have immediate access to the outside and it cannot be envisaged how this can be achieved. However, use is made of the outside grassed area when groups of children are taken outside and supervised by a member of staff. A noticeable and good feature is the many visits children make to the locality and further afield.

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

The leader who has been in post for two years has provided the Cylch with clear direction and purpose focused on children's needs.

The Cylch displays a sense of purpose that has promoted and sustained improvements in the provision and quality of education provided for the children over the last two years. The leader is well supported by her deputy and all other staff. As a team they work well together, each fulfilling their roles efficiently and complementing each other. The Cylch displays a willingness to seek improvements for the benefit of the children. Practitioners share values, aims and objectives and all staff contribute to the planning process. Staff successfully create a pleasant working atmosphere for the children.

New staff, including students on work experience, are inducted into the workings of the Cylch and very soon function as a valued member of the team. Appraisal is undertaken regularly and staff needs are matched to professional training courses provided by the local authority. Very good links with parents are in place.

The management committee is effective and fulfil their legal duties. They are well aware of the work of the Cylch and appreciative of the commitment of the staff. They are well informed of the work of the Cylch. The Cylch has taken good account of both national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation document is detailed and incorporates a full analysis of each of the Estyn quality indicators. In each instance the self-evaluation document expands where necessary to give a complete picture of the Cylch. This was a collaborative exercise involving all the staff and considerable time and effort. The self-evaluation document highlights the strengths of the Cylch in detail and is focused on the positive gains for children. The document tends to be descriptive and not always based on available evidence of children's achievement. Areas for improvement are included on the developmental plan – these are realistic and will result in improved provision for the children. However, areas for improvement are not prioritised and details of evaluation procedures are not always stated.

Practitioners are attended professional developmental courses and these have proved beneficial. The Cylch management committee fully support the staff's attendance on such courses. The impact of professional training is evaluated in terms of benefit to the children. Good links exist with community organisations and with other nursery settings.

Partnership working: Good

The Cylch maintains good links with the community, parents and the receiving primary school. Visits and visitors from the local community help children to develop an understanding of their local community and the role of different people in the community.

Discussion with a sample of parents and carers bringing their children to the Cylch confirms the feeling of trust and clear communication that exists and their support for the Cylch. Parents have easy access to the Cylch staff enabling them to discuss any matters of concern. Well established links with the reception teachers in the feeder primary school, including visits by these teachers, facilitates the transfer of the children.

An outstanding feature of the partnership is the support provided by the local authority support teacher. Her contribution has been highly effective in developing the Cylch over the last two years and through regular visits, discussion and advice, the quality of provision has been substantially improved. The Cylch is appreciative of this help and has, in turn, been open to advice and ideas and incorporated them into its planning with the subsequent improvement in the quality of provision.

The Cylch also benefits from support provided by Mudiad Meithrin in terms of policy statements and advice, particularly in relation to the development of the Welsh language.

Resource management: Good

All practitioners work well as a team complimenting each other in their duties. All are well aware of their responsibilities. Staff are actively involved in planning the curriculum and this ensures that their expertise is well used. The leader is well supported by the deputy leader.

Staff are appropriately trained in Child Care and the setting benefits from having a student from the “Cam wrth Gam” organisation. Most staff are fluent in the Welsh language and others understand the language, have a good basic Welsh vocabulary and are engaged in learning the language.

Staff successfully motivate the children to learn and use their expertise to the best effect. The outside, though not immediately accessible to children, is used when possible.

Overall, resources are well used and the Cylch provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parents Questionnaire

Eleven questionnaires were returned. Parents were asked to respond to 16 statements indicating one of five categories – “strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or don’t know”.

The responses can be summarised as follows:

All respondents “agreed” and approximately three quarters “strongly agreed” with the following statements

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.

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

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

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

My child is well prepared for moving on to school.

There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.

The setting is well run.

Half the respondents “agreed” that

I am kept well informed about their child’s progress

whilst the remaining 50% “strongly agreed”.

Children’s response

All children enjoy coming to the Cylch. They show enthusiasm and are soon involved in activities set out for them. They have the self-confidence to talk to a visitor and to describe what they are doing. Children said they particularly liked looking at books and listening to stories.

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.

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<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"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<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>
Foundation Phase	<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>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<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>

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.