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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Trelai
Plymouthwood Road
Cardiff
CF5 4DD**

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:

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 Trelai has sole use of a building which was formerly used by the local lawn bowling club. The building and the surrounds has been modified and currently provide good quality provision for the children, including a large outside play area.

The Cylch serves an area on the western outskirts of the City of Cardiff, an area acknowledged as being socially and economically disadvantaged. The Cylch is a Welsh medium setting registered by the Mudiad Meithrin and in receipt of their award of "Cylch Ragorol". The Cylch is run by a management committee and is a member of the City of Cardiff Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships.

The Cylch operates every morning (9 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.) and afternoons (12 – 2.30 p.m.) five days a week and for 39 weeks of the year. Children attend from age 2 years and leave for the next stage in their education in September following their fourth birthday.

The setting is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate a maximum of 34 children. Currently there are 11 three year olds on the register of whom 7 are funded. Some children are fee paying and others are funded by the Flying Start and Sure Start assisted places.

Children come from the local area, and predominantly are from English speaking homes. A small percentage of children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The setting welcomes children whatever their background or ability.

Children and parents enter a hallway where useful information for parents and carers is displayed. There is a cloakroom with named places for coats and the children are greeted by members of the staff and proceed to the main teaching room. The main teaching room is suitably differentiated into activity areas focused on the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. This room is warm and the environment is enhanced by display materials and children's creative work. Adjacent to this room is a well furnished kitchen. There is also a small room used for creative work and children's toilets. Another room is available for private meetings when required.

Outside has been developed and provides a good area for children's play activities. Static play equipment is in good order with soft play surface. There is adequate space for the children to use moveable toys and a grassed area. Secure storage area is also available since little in the way of equipment can be left unattended overnight.

The setting is generously staffed with experienced and well qualified practitioners. Welsh learners are making every effort to improve their language skills.

Children leaving the Cylch transfer to one of the city's Welsh medium schools, usually Ysgol Coed y Gof. Excellent links exist with this school and this facilitates the transfer of the children.

The setting was previously inspected by Estyn in November 2006. The recommendations have been addressed. CSSIW inspected the setting in 2012 and there were no recommendations.

Summary

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

Current performance

Excellent features

- The care, support and guidance provided for the children.

Good features

- Children's standards of achievement and their progress in learning.
- Children's wellbeing.
- Learning experiences provided for the children.
- Quality of teaching.
- The learning environment.
- The quality of leadership and management.
- Self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement.
- Relationships with parents and receiving school.

Prospects for improvement

Good features

- The quality of the self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement.
- The track record of bringing about improvement in the provision.
- Self-evaluative attitude of the staff and the willingness to incorporate new ideas.
- The positive leadership and management and the success in obtaining financial support.
- Support provided by all partners.

Recommendations

The setting needs to:

R1 Maintain and, where possible, improve the current good educational provision.

R2 Refine assessment procedures so as to identify individual children's skill development and to use these observations to plan activities well matched to their ability.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children make good and sometimes very good progress from their starting point on entry. Overall, they achieve good standards. All children show very good commitment to their tasks and display a very good attitude.

Children work at full capacity and rarely was any child not fully engaged in tasks. They have the self-confidence derived from the support provided for them, to be confident decision-makers selecting tasks that interest them.

Whilst practically all children come from English speaking homes, they are becoming increasingly competent and confident in the Welsh language, so much so that most children continue their education in Welsh language primary schools. They understand more words than they can speak and they respond willingly to instructions and suggestions. All children enjoy Welsh stories and particularly like action songs. They show an interest in books and many experiment with mark-making. Older and more able children can write their names in a recognisable form. These children count to five in Welsh and use mathematical language such as “large” and “small”. They recognise shapes such as triangles, circle and square and match patterns.

All children have access to a computer and are beginning to use the computer mouse and icons to colour screen pictures.

Children’s creative skills are developing well. They enjoy painting and mix paint to produce different shades and colours. There are ample opportunities for physical activities and virtually all children ride tricycles and scooters confidently. They also show good hand-eye co-ordination.

Wellbeing: Good

All children acquire very good social skills. They are affectionate and happy to meet up with their friends in the setting. They have a positive attitude, are considerate and courteous and relate very well to each other and to adults. Children display behaviour that indicates that they feel safe and free from any form of physical or verbal abuse at the setting. This is a very good and notable feature of the Cylch.

Children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating and this is reinforced by the foods they have as snacks. Snack times are very good social occasions where children learn to share, to help each other and to enjoy their snacks. The respect they show each other is complemented by the respect that adults show for each child.

Children are also actively involved in making decisions about their learning.

Overall, children's wellbeing is given priority in the setting and this is highly successful in developing their personal and social skills and in producing children who are balanced and well adjusted to life in the Cylch.

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

Planning is done collaboratively involving all staff and takes into account children's interests. This successfully ensures that the planning is child-centered and successfully engages all children. Many activities are highly innovative and the planning incorporates new ideas and suggestions. Staff are highly evaluative and the curriculum is always being evolved. Learning experiences successfully progress children towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.

Planning includes some focused activities for the different ability children. However, tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to children's ability and prior achievement so as to provide them with suitably differentiated and challenging work.

Planned activities successfully develop children's confidence to become independent learners and the curriculum successfully develops their physical and creative skills and an understanding of the world around them.

The day-to-day activities encourage children to use the Welsh language and children increasingly use Welsh words and phrases in their learning. Children's knowledge and understanding of the traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales is good. Specific days and celebrations are incorporated into the curriculum, such as St. David's Day. Children dress up, make pictures and taste traditional foods. Very good emphasis is also placed on developing children's knowledge of other cultures. During the inspection a local visitor was developing children's knowledge of West Indies culture through stories and dressing up in clothes she had brought in for a West Indies "Carnival".

Children learn about recycling through collecting waste foods for recycling.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have very good up-to-date knowledge of child development and are experienced. They have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. A good and notable feature is practitioner's high expectations of all children, whatever their background and ability.

Planning incorporates a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed or led activities. Planning takes good account of children's individual needs and this is facilitated by practitioner's knowledge of each individual child. Children's needs are addressed flexibly and children are well supported but given sufficient opportunities to work independently.

An outstanding feature of the Cylch is its excellent atmosphere and supportive ethos. Children benefit from the calm atmosphere that prevails and staff rarely feel the need to intervene. Behaviour is excellent and staff are very good role models, both in terms of their use of the Welsh language and in establishing interpersonal skills and relationships.

All practitioners are involved in planning and are fully conversant of what they are expected to do. Staff enjoy working with children and these children benefit substantially from being at the Cylch.

All children are assessed regularly and observations recorded. Key workers have primary responsibility for groups of children and for recording their achievement. Each child's achievement is recorded in a personal file and summarised by the responsible practitioner. Review of these records indicates children's progress. Children's achievements form the basis of future planning which is largely focused on children's needs and interests. This is good practice but needs to be further developed so as to identify children's skills, particularly in language and numeracy and to identify the next steps in their learning. This would enable suitably differentiated activities to be planned which are well matched to individual children's learning needs and to provide them with tasks that challenge them.

Parents are aware of their children's achievement but they are less clear as to what they can do to help them improve.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The Cylch's provision for promoting the health and wellbeing of the children, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The Cylch has established a highly effective relationship with all partners involved in child care and guidance. Within this community, recognised as an area of social deprivation, the Cylch has established trust and provides specific support for children and families with their complex and specific needs. The leader and several staff, through years of experience, know the families well and their specific circumstances. It is within this context that the Cylch operates.

The manager and Cylch leader have both undertaken professional training to enable them to assess the children suspected of having additional needs. This training – "Schedule of Growing Skills" (SOGS) designed for health professionals, enables them to assess children in line with their Centinal Line. This means that children are assessed and monitored within the Cylch and their additional needs are addressed promptly. This includes physical, hearing, sight, emotional or any other needs can be reported to the appropriate authority and their needs supported. This work is recognised as being highly beneficial by the specialist organisations working in the community including health visitors and medical professionals so that information can be collated centrally. In this way no child can be "lost" in the system. This is excellent practice.

Children requiring additional learning support have full access to all areas of the curriculum and have their own individual educational plans (IEP) tailored to their

specific needs, be it educational, emotional or behavioural needs. These IEP's are detailed and include targets for the child, termly reviews and assessment of progress. Parents and carers are actively involved and are encouraged to play a full part in their child's development programme. The Cylch also works closely with the external agencies that support the child. Where necessary, the child receives 1:1 support of a support teacher.

A very good and notable feature of the support children with additional learning needs receive is the well established link with the receiving primary school, so ensuring continuity of the support. Teachers from the receiving school visit the Cylch on a regular basis so as to familiarise themselves with these children and their particular needs. The child's record of achievement accompanies them to their next phase of education.

The Cylch manager supports individual parents with their problems and is well known for her community support. She attends Case Conferences for children on the "at risk register". This includes strategy meetings and core group meetings and she visits children at home.

Children who have been identified by the general health visitors working in the locality regularly refer children to the Cylch. This includes those from families recognised as in need of respite for emotional, social, health or drug related issues. The Cylch monitors such children and reports to the relevant professional organisation.

The Cylch also works with G.P's as a referral drop in service for children in need of specific treatment, so as to ensure that a child receives proper and appropriate treatment.

The Cylch has appropriate policies and procedures in place in respect of safeguarding children. All staff have received recent and relevant training with the manager being the responsible person for dealing with child protection. Procedures follow and reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Overall, the day-to-day working of the Cylch is well above expectations in terms of fostering values such as respect for each other, fairness, truth and honesty. All children working in this calm supportive environment are learning to take responsibility and to help one another. An excellent feature of the Cylch is the interpersonal relationships evident where there are no raised voices or any show of dissent. Adults and children interact quietly and enjoy each other's company. Behaviour is exceptional and children contribute substantially to the general ethos of their surroundings. This is an exceptional provision for these children and recognised as such by other professionals and organisations.

Learning environment: Good

Children attending the Cylch enjoy being in a calm, well-ordered environment where they feel safe and well supported by experienced staff. The ethos of the Cylch is fully inclusive, offering all children equal access to the curriculum.

The relationships between adults and children establish a feeling of tolerance which is ingrained in the children and displayed by their attitudes. All are free from harassment and any form of oppressive behaviour. Children are treated with affection and there have been no complaints from anyone.

The Cylch is generously staffed with well qualified and experienced practitioners. A very good and outstanding feature of the Cylch is the staff commitment resulting in their high level of attendance. Absence of staff for any reason is practically unknown.

The Cylch is well resourced to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. It also addressed well the specific needs of the children and takes good account of their interests.

Accommodation is well used and provides for the needs and expectations of the children. The local environment is well used to enhance the facilities at the setting.

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

The Cylch benefits from the highly effective and innovative leadership and management, and the commitment of staff to provide the best possible provision for the children. The leadership gives clear direction and a sense of purpose to the Cylch. It is focused on promoting and sustaining improvement. The leader sets an outstanding example and through her intimate knowledge of the children and their backgrounds provides these children with high quality support beyond the confines of the Cylch.

The manager is very well supported by the Cylch leader and staff who share similar values, aims and objectives and who contribute to strategic planning. There is a positive ethos and high expectations of the children which are realised in practice.

Staff and children are well managed and overall a calm, harmonious atmosphere pervades the whole setting. Induction courses are organised when necessary but this is a stable staff who support each other very well.

Appraisal is undertaken annually and used to highlight staff development issues and training. All professional courses attended by any member of staff are appraised.

Links with parents are very effective in that they establish trust and enable staff to be made aware of any child's needs.

The management committee understand their roles, and are well informed about the performance of the setting. Decisions made have proved very effective in improving the provision. They fulfil their legal duties.

The Cylch has taken account of both National and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum and the Cardiff Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation procedures are well established and have been used to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation is very detailed and incorporates all aspects outlined in the Framework for the Inspection of Non-Maintained Sector Settings. The Cylch has a very good track record of identifying areas for development and bringing about the necessary improvements. This has resulted in the current good and very good provision for the children.

The Cylch has prioritised areas for improvement and put in place strategies for improvement. This has involved all practitioners. The Cylch is in no way complacent and is continually seeking ways to improve. Good use has been made of grant aid and the Cylch works well with the local community.

All practitioners are fully engaged in professional development. Through regular discussion and appraisal meetings both professional and personal needs of staff are identified and training opportunities sought. This has included Welsh language development courses for staff improving their language competence. This is having a positive impact on children's progress and has included the development of the "Forest School" initiative. Practitioners have visited other settings and the Cylch is recognised as an exemplar of good practice.

Partnership working: Good

The Cylch has outstanding relationships with parents. The relationship is based on trust and parents and carers know that they will receive support from the Cylch when required. In discussion, parents reported positively on the partnership that existed. Parents are always involved in decisions about their children.

Parents have a welcome pack before their child starts at the Cylch and an invitation to visit with their child. A half-termly newsletter keep parents informed of the Cylch activities and what they can do to help their child. Parents also recognise the "Open Door" policy and there are opportunities for private discussions with the staff if required.

Good links exist with the community. Children visit, for example, the library, fire station and shops. Visitors from the community are a regular feature.

A notable and very good feature that is a regular occurrence and was observed during the inspection, is the visit of a story teller. This lady told stories based on the West Indies traditions to small groups of children. They were dressed in appropriate clothes and trinkets for a West Indies Carnival. This was a highly effective and creative way of introducing West Indies customs and traditions and children reacted very positively to this initiative.

The setting also has very good relationships with the receiving primary schools, particularly “Ysgol Coed Y Gof”. Staff from the school visit the Cylch regularly to get to know the children and to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Children take their records of achievement with them, together with the Cylch records. This includes instances where children receive specific help and where they have additional learning needs. Children also visit the school for specific occasions. This facilitates the transfer of children. These partnerships are well established and the clear communication between the Cylch, parents and the receiving primary school make a good, positive contribution to children’s learning and wellbeing.

Planning is a collaborate process involving all partners, including the children, staff, parents and the support staff of the Local Authority. The Cylch is also affiliated to the Mudiad Meithrin and uses their expertise both in terms of the Cylch policies and staff expertise.

Resource management: Good

Staff are appropriately deployed and let no opportunities pass without supporting children as necessary, be it inside the classroom or outside in the play area.

Resources are well used to motivate children and resources purchased in the past are well used. The Cylch has planned for future needs and these are well focused on improving provision for the children.

The outdoors is well used to develop children’s skills across all areas of learning.

Overall, the setting deploys its resources well and provides very good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parents responses

Ten 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 strongly agreed 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.

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

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

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

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

The setting is well run.

All agreed and 80% strongly agreed that:

My child is well prepared for moving on to school.

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

There were no responses that disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements above.

Children

Children’s attitudes show that they enjoy coming to the Cylch. They enter confidently and greet each other with affection. In conversation they said they enjoyed meeting their friends, this included the staff. They said they were well looked after and enjoyed story telling. Many were reluctant to leave at the end of the session.

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.