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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Amlwch
Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch
Amlwch
Isle of Anglesey
LL68 9DU**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

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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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Publication date: 30/05/12

About the setting

Cylch Meithrin Amlwch is a Welsh medium cylch based in Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch, Amlwch, Isle of Anglesey. All the children attending the cylch come from the town and the surrounding area. The area is recognised as being neither socially nor economically advantaged or disadvantaged.

The cylch has been located in the school since 2009 and it shares the school's use of the building and the outdoor area.

The cylch reports that around a half of the children come from homes where Welsh is spoken. Children represent the full range of ability and the cylch accepts children with additional learning needs.

Two children in the current group are recognised as having additional learning needs. The cylch receives assistance from outside agencies to support children that have additional needs. One child attending at present is from a minority ethnic background and none come from socially disadvantaged homes.

The cylch is registered for a maximum of 16 children and it accepts children from two and a half years old. There are currently up to 17 children attending the cylch at different times during the week. Eight of these are funded three year olds. The Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority support the cylch.

The leader is in post since 2012. Three members of staff assist her on a part time basis. They are all suitably qualified.

There is an informative booklet available for parents and carers that provides them with details of the cylch. Parents and carers bring their children into the cylch and this provides for a meeting with the staff if needed. The cylch is open for four mornings a week between 8.50am and 11.20am and two afternoons between 12.30pm and 3pm.

The cylch is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. The management committee oversees the work of the cylch.

The cylch was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in April 2011. Estyn inspected the cylch in 2006.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Adequate
The setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

There are recent changes in staffing and the leader, the majority of the staff and the management committee are new to their roles. The current performance of the cylch is adequate.

The strengths include:

- good standards to the children's work;
- the children's consistent understanding of their wellbeing, health and safety;
- robust consistency to the care, support and guidance;
- the staff's use and quality of Welsh; and
- good partnerships with outside agencies that support the work of the cylch.

The areas for improvement include:

- challenging children according to their abilities through clear learning objectives;
- developing effective planning to improve opportunities outside the classroom;
- providing opportunities for the children to develop their awareness of their community and the people that live and work in their community;
- recording assessments consistently and noting specific targets to move the children forward;
- effective provision to develop the understanding of the wider world and the children's awareness of global citizenship;
- ensuring that the new self-evaluation and development plan affect successfully the cylch's long-term strategy; and
- addressing the recommendations that are noted in the previous inspection.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the new energetic leader and the management committee are beginning to provide a clear strategic direction to the work of the cylch, which is based on more detailed self-evaluation;
- recent developments show improvements for the sake of the children;
- all the staff are enthusiastic and have positive and practical attitudes to development and training;
- the staff work well together; and
- good support is used consistently to target specific and appropriate aspects that need improvements.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the cylch needs to:

- R1 plan together as a staff and set clear learning objectives for the children at the beginning of every focus activity in order to challenge every child appropriately;
- R2 ensure that daily assessments are completed consistently and that they lead directly to individual children's targets;
- R3 provide better opportunities for the children to visit and learn about their community and raise their awareness of the wider world and global citizenship;
- R4 develop and enrich the resources and experiences in the outdoor area; and
- R5 develop the systems of the management committee, the leader and the staff in order to establish the strategic planning and self-evaluation in the daily life of the cylch.

What happens next?

The cylch will produce an action plan in order to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the cylch's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The entry standards of nearly all children when they start at the cylch are good. Nearly all children achieve good standards and make appropriate progress in all areas of learning considering their starting points. There is no significant difference in the standards of different groups of children in the cylch.

Nearly all children make positive progress in developing their literacy skills in the Welsh language. Whilst very few children are reluctant to use the language on occasions, nearly all have a good understanding of the language. Nearly all the children have well-developed listening skills. Nearly all the children enjoy and are eager to contribute to stories that are read to them.

Most answer questions enthusiastically and this shows clearly their developing understanding of the language. Most children respond sensibly to group discussions and understand changes to the weather and temperature through activities with ice. Another notable feature of their developing competence is that they respond in Welsh with very little prompting to colours and numbers.

Many children choose to look at books independently. They hold books appropriately and study pictures and print with interest. They recognise the main characters in a story like Goldilocks and discuss the content of a story enthusiastically with each other.

Most children are beginning to develop their writing skills and a notable feature of their early writing is that they understand the purpose of writing through practical tasks. They, therefore, see the purpose of mark making and attempt to make sense of their early writing. Very few children are beginning to form reasonably recognisable letters of the alphabet independently.

Nearly all children are developing their numeracy skills well through the practical use of number, using mathematical language such as 'smaller than' or 'larger than', 'long' and 'longer' and through using two and three-dimensional shapes. Most children can group objects by colour.

Many children use electronic equipment well. They use the computer with confidence through controlling the necessary equipment. Most children create interesting pictures with paints and dance enthusiastically to music. They have a good awareness of a store of Welsh songs and nursery rhymes, which they sing enthusiastically.

Nearly all children are fully engaged in every activity and concentrate and persevere for significant periods of time. They make decisions and work well independently inside the building and use the available equipment appropriately in the outside area.

Nearly all the children participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities available to them that successfully develops their creative skills successfully.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children, relative to their age, have an appropriate understanding of how they can keep healthy. They know, for example, when they need to wash their hands and do so with little prompting. Most children have the good knowledge that a healthy diet incorporates fruit and vegetables

Nearly all the children's attitude to learning is good. They show interest in their work and in the activities planned for them. Nearly all children sustain good concentration for significant periods of time and make decisions independently.

All children relate well to each other, to adults and visitors. They are courteous and considerate and willing to share resources. All children take a full part in the life and activities of the cylch through offering suggestions about their work. They take worthwhile opportunities to suggest their own ideas and these are, when possible, prioritised into children's tasks and activities.

The children are not very aware of their community because the links with the community do not draw the children's attention to the people of their community. Overall, the children do not display a sense of belonging to their community because they do not visit the community regularly.

Nearly all children are happy and all children are well cared for and are free from any form of harassment.

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

The leader prepares the timetable and organisation of the cylch, however, limited time is set aside for staff to meet to plan the curriculum together. The curriculum is flexible and is matched appropriately to the children's interests. However, on occasions there is not enough challenge for individual children to match their abilities in focus activities.

The curriculum meets the philosophy of the Foundation Phase curriculum and achieves the identified outcomes of children's learning effectively. Overall, the curriculum builds on children's knowledge and previous experiences and incorporates good opportunities for the development of most skills across the curriculum. However, there is not effective planning and enough focus on improving play, investigation and enquiry outside the classroom.

There are worthwhile opportunities incorporated into the day-to-day working of the cylch for children to develop their self-confidence and to become independent learners. Whilst specific activities are planned, children have the freedom to select their own tasks and activities.

The provision includes effective opportunities for all children to develop respect for each other; opportunities to form good relationships with each other and with adults; and to become tolerant of each other.

Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their basic and key skills of literacy, numeracy and creativity. An effective aspect of children's learning experiences is the provision made for children to acquire the Welsh language. Welsh is the natural language of communication between adults and children. Through coherent opportunities, nearly all children, whatever their background, display enjoyment in speaking the language through looking at story books and singing nursery rhymes.

Children have opportunities to develop their thinking skills through water activities and computer tasks, which focus on literacy skills.

The traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales are given due emphasis, like the celebration of St. David's Day. There is not effective provision for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions. Therefore, the cylch's provision to develop an understanding of the wider world and to raise the children's awareness of age appropriate global citizenship is not effective.

In the past, children have had opportunities to plant seeds and look after plants, which begin their understanding of plant growth and sustainability.

Teaching: Adequate

The quality of teaching has strengths that outweigh areas for improvement. The staff have an appropriate knowledge of children's development and a developing understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Recently, training by the local authority has supported the staff's professional development well in relation to the Foundation Phase.

The staff have a suitable understanding of their roles and best use is made of their expertise. However, when focus activities are introduced, there are not enough references made to the activities' learning objectives. Therefore, the children are unsure on how to succeed whilst performing the task.

A system of sharing responsibilities exists and the staff have suitable knowledge of a small number of children. However, apart from the leader, they do not note the achievements and progress of the children regularly. There is a good balance between adult directed and child-selected activities, especially indoors. All children are free to select from either independent or adult led activities.

The staff provide a well-prepared and interesting indoor environment that successfully ensures children's involvement and enjoyment. Staff model Welsh consistently well and use questioning effectively to develop the children's language skills and mathematical development.

Assessment is adequate. Even though the staff know the children well, they do not plan the next steps in their learning in enough detail. There are appropriate records of children's achievements, however, they are not used consistently to move the

children on to the next steps in their learning. The records are made available to parents and the local school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The cylch's provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing is good. Nearly all children enjoy their time at the cylch. They arrive showing a sense of anticipation and are keen to get involved. They partake enthusiastically in activities set out for them. Most of the curriculum develops and extends children's experiences effectively.

The cylch's provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral and social development is good. The cultural aspect is not as effective. Values, such as honesty, fairness, respect and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered through the day-to-day activities and accepted without question. Nearly all children know and accept the social norms of living together, sharing and accepting the views of others and being members of a community. Individual children accept specific responsibilities, like tidying after their food, which develops their self-esteem. The cylch is an organised unit, where children value each other and in turn, the staff value them.

The cylch's staff are vigilant in identifying children requiring specialist help. They make use of professional help and guidance effectively when necessary. Staff receive regular and appropriate training. The staff deal regularly with thorough risk assessments.

The cylch has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The cylch is secure, where the door is closed and there is a gate across the entrance. The outside doors are locked and only opened by a member of staff, consequently, no one can enter or a child leave unaccompanied. Good care is taken when children are being collected to ensure they are in the care of their parents or of a known carer.

Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that any child suspected of requiring additional help is noted and their progress is monitored closely. The cylch's leader is the additional learning needs co-ordinator and is familiar with the necessary procedures for supporting such a child.

Where necessary, external agencies are involved and support is provided if needed. At present, two children have additional learning needs.

Learning environment: Good

The cylch, through its day-to-day activities and the approach adopted by the staff promotes a positive ethos. Staff know the children well and their individuality is recognised. All children have equal access and opportunities to the curriculum. The provision and planning of resources and experiences in the outdoor area is adequate at the moment, even though there are rich opportunities available on the grounds and play areas of the school.

The homely atmosphere and the friendship provided by the staff ensures that a tolerant attitude pervades the cylch. The cylch employs positive behaviour strategies that successfully eliminate any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. All children enjoy equality of opportunity.

The cylch's staff are well qualified and experienced and there is a very favourable adult to child ratio. Staff expertise is used well in supervising activities. The cylch uses its resources well to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the needs of the children, apart from the outdoor area. The resources are accessible to children and this promotes the children's sense of independence and responsibility.

At the moment, there are no consistent visits to the community and visitors to the cylch. Therefore, there is not clear evidence of the children's understanding of their community.

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

The management committee, the leader and the majority of the staff are very new to their posts. The leader is energetic and she works closely with the rest of the staff to create a positive ethos, which urges and values teamwork. The cylch has introduced a number of strategies recently to move the cylch on. However, the developments that are operational have not yet established adequately to improve quality.

The training provided supports well the professional development of the leader and the staff. By now, the knowledge developed is used purposefully and is beginning to move the cylch forward strategically. The leader has specific responsibilities to develop the cylch as a learning community. She shares the new practices purposefully with the other staff to improve their professional practices and children's standards.

The staff contribute practically through sharing clear instructions with each other. They also accept advice from outside agencies to improve. During the inspection, there was a positive ethos and a vision to provide the best possible experiences for the children.

The new management committee is starting to play a purposeful role in the life of the cylch. They now take good account of legislation and the relevant guidance meets legal requirements in full.

The management committee is beginning to monitor and direct the very new self-evaluation and development planning systems well. The support from the local authority is effective.

The development plan is structured appropriately according to timelines and responsibilities; however, the plan has not had appropriate time to affect the long-term strategy of the cylch. The changes in staffing have delayed some areas that

need improving, however, on the whole, the new processes that are now in place, are showing positive improvements in a short time.

The cylch has taken good account of national priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process is new, however, the procedures have not yet led to improving quality and provision further. By now, the self-evaluation procedures are more systematic and clear. All of the staff are more aware of the purpose and impact of effective self-evaluation. The managers and leader are developing a better understanding of the cylch's strengths and weaknesses. They now focus appropriately on developing provision further.

The improvement plan, which arises from the recent self-evaluation, is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the cylch further. The focus of the plan targets specific areas and is beginning to challenge the cylch to improve.

The staff have been included in a series of good training and development opportunities. These include working in partnership with the local authority. Inconsistent progress has been made in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection concerning assessment systems, the use of the local community and visitors to the cylch and developing the outdoor area. Recently, the new management committee and the new leader are beginning to address the aspects identified in the previous report effectively.

Partnership working: Good

There are effective links with parents and carers. Parents, in the questionnaire replies and during discussions expressed their satisfaction with the cylch and are appreciative of the standards of care and the quality of education available. They appreciate the open door policy and the opportunities they have to meet staff on a daily basis.

They are informed well of their children's achievements and progress, which helps them support their children's learning.

By the time the children leave the cylch, parents feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The links with the local school, the Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority are good.

The support provided by the staff of the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin benefits the cylch. The advice and suggestions have helped in moving the cylch forward and has contributed to improvements in the standard of provision and leadership.

Resource management: Adequate

Recently, the changes in staffing have caused inconsistencies. By now, staffing,

resources and finance are managed well. The staff's knowledge is developing through appropriate training to present a suitable curriculum. The staff's expertise is used well and they work effectively side-by-side with each other to improve children's achievements.

The cylch has enough resources and they are used effectively to further the aims of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The resources are accessible to the children and this encourages independence and has a positive impact on their learning. The cylch does not use the outside area effectively.

The cylch uses the building effectively and provides appropriate experiences, which are planned well. The support of outside agencies has ensured better consistency, good standards and better provision recently.

Even though, much has been achieved recently, the strategic planning and development priorities have not had time to establish and affect the planning, assessment and provision appropriately in specific areas like knowledge and understanding of the world.

Even though, there is significant and very recent progress in many areas, the cylch currently provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fourteen parents and carers responded to the questionnaires. All the parents and carers are very positive about all of the cylch's work apart from one parent that noted that there are not a good variety of activities, which include trips and visits. These responses compare very favourably with national benchmark comparisons.

Responses to discussions with learners

Nearly all children are happy in the cylch. Their enthusiasm is evident when they arrive and meet with their peers. Nearly all of them are self-confident from knowing that they are supported well and that they have appropriate tasks that attract their interest.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Nicholas Jones	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)

Glossary of terms

<p>Areas of Learning</p>	<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
<p>CSSIW</p>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<p>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</p>	<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 partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
<p>Foundation Phase</p>	<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>
<p>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</p>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<p>Local authority advisory teacher</p>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings, which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<p>Mudiad Meithrin</p>	<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.