

The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on: Cylch Meithrin Corn Hir

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Iwan Roberts

Date of inspection: 27 and 28 November 2008

Contract Number: H/069/08N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of the Nursery: Cylch Meithrin Corn Hir

**Address: Safle Ysgol Corn Hir
Bryn Meurig
Llangefni
Anglesey**

Post Code: LL77 7JB

Telephone: 01248 722851

Person responsible for day-to day management: Lynne Van-Huysse

Position: Leader

About the inspection

The inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children to achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child in the nursery and it should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

1.0 Context of the setting

Context of the nursery setting:

This Welsh-medium Cylch Meithrin (Nursery) is held in purpose-built accommodation on the site of Ysgol Corn Hir, Llangefni, Anglesey. It was established originally in 1985 as Cylch Meithrin Penrallt but moved to its present location in September 2008. The building is registered for 24 children in the morning and 24 in the afternoon and it is suitable in terms of size. In addition to the main teaching room, it has a storage area, toilets, including a disabled toilet, and a foyer. A corner of the teaching room has been designed as a kitchen with resources to provide light refreshments for the children. There is an enclosed outside play area that is shared with the primary school, as well as an equipment store. The Cylch also has use of the school playing field and they have weekly access to the school hall.

The setting is managed by a voluntary committee. It is a registered member of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. It operates as a member of the Anglesey Early Years and Child Care Partnership which funds 17 three-year-old children and seven four-year-olds in four sessions per week, each of 2.5 hours duration. These children are currently offered an additional session on the fifth morning. There is an afternoon provision for 18 younger children and this number is expected to increase during the course of the year.

The vast majority of children come from the Corn Hir Primary School catchment area. It is judged that the area is neither privileged nor economically and socially disadvantaged. Children of all abilities are accepted, including children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). There are no children from an ethnic minority group.

Four members of staff are employed, including the leader. All members of staff have a level 3 qualification in early years care and education. They are also fluent in both Welsh and English. In addition to these members of staff, a female student is located in the Cylch for eight sessions a week.

Of the 24 children who attend the morning sessions, 14 come from homes in which Welsh is the first language and 10 from homes in which English is the main language.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in May 2008 and the previous Estyn Inspection was in 2002.

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning

The quality and general standards of the educational provision are appropriate and promote successfully the results of the Foundation Phase for educating children.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Area of learning	Grade for under-5s
Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity	2
Language, literacy and communication skills	2
Mathematical development	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2
Physical development	3
Creative development	2

2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

Quality of education	Grade for under-5s
Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
Quality of planning for children's learning	3
Quality of teaching	3
Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reports for parents and carers	3
Quality of the relationship with parents, carers and the community	1
The extent to which the setting contributes to the children's wellbeing	2
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	2
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	2

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds and by 4-5 year-olds

3.1 Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity

Standards in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The children have settled well in the Cylch and are happy and at home there. Their behaviour is good and they respond positively to instructions and the leadership of adults. The children have a very good relationship with each other and with staff and they will ask for help if required.

They are aware of the importance of hygiene and personal safety and they take responsibility for tidying up and maintaining equipment when appropriate. Most of the children wash their hands before eating without having to be told. They eat their snacks in a well-organised environment and their behaviour is good.

Most of the children respond very positively to the challenge of new activities and concentrate for suitable periods when completing them. They keep closely to guidance limiting numbers in some activities and are willing to wait their turn when necessary.

They understand the need to treat every living thing with care. Their awareness of different cultures is developed through activities such as those centered around an Indian doll or from their relationship with an imaginary friend called Kabo and his family.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

The standards of language, literacy and communication skills are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Almost all the children communicate orally with confidence with the staff of the Cylch and the majority do so with others. Most can convey their needs effectively when necessary and some are able to hold an extended conversation discussing their experiences and expressing an opinion. Their vocabulary is continually extended and the influence of the themes pursued since the beginning of the term can be identified, eg 'Fi fy hun' (Me myself) , 'Yr Hydref' (The Autumn) and the current theme 'Fy Nhŷ' (My House). The majority use suitable and purposeful language during role-play.

The children enjoy listening to a story and can memorise parts of them. They also derive pleasure from learning and repeating verses and rhymes. The majority can recognise their names on badges and they are developing basic writing skills through the experience of making marks in several media. A number of them understand various functions of writing such as labelling a picture or sending a letter to Santa.

Almost all the children are familiar with books and behave like readers when dealing with them. They hold books in the correct manner and turn pages in a meaningful way. The more mature children are aware that a series of pictures in a book tell a story and are prepared to offer an interpretation to fellow readers.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings

3.3 Mathematical development

The standards of mathematical development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Most of the children can count objects up to five and the majority can count beyond five. They use rhymes and songs such as 'five brickies building a wall' which stems from the current theme to reinforce their knowledge. The majority are also able to identify numbers to three. They use vocabulary such as more/less and in front/behind naturally in their play. The majority are developing the concept of adding one, eg one year to their age or the number in a group changes when another child joins it.

By testing some of the ongoing activities, eg by throwing bean bags at different shaped 'targets', the children develop a recognition of those shapes. Their basic concept of capacity is also developed by the activities experienced in the sand and water pit.

The children develop their technical skills well by using the computer and programable toys and some have become very confident in this area.

The children develop an understanding of the passage of time through the routines of their daily timetable and the activities linked to it. Some are able to identify significant times in the daily pattern on the clock.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.4 Knowledge and understanding of the world

The standards are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The children's awareness of their area has developed following local visits, and the majority of them speak confidently about their homes and where they live. Their understanding is reinforced by visits from parents to talk about their work.

The themes pursued are a means to enrich their experiences and 'The Autumn' has developed their understanding of the significance and effect of the seasons. They are aware that elements of the weather such as snow are associated with certain periods of the year and a number of them are able to discuss this in some detail. They are also aware of the need for appropriate clothing at different times of the year. The majority understand that the seasons affect animals and plants.

The children are able to name the main external parts of their bodies, and enjoy games such as put your finger on your nose, put your finger on your tummy etc.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.5 Physical development

Good features outweigh shortcomings.

The children's skills in dealing with a range of small equipment are developing satisfactorily. In craft activities, they use crayons, pencils, paint brushes and chalk confidently. The majority can use scissors satisfactorily. They enjoy handling and rolling clay and dough and show perseverance when using modelling equipment.

When there is an opportunity to hold group or collective activities in the classroom, the children respond enthusiastically to instruction and guidance which encourages them to move and to extend their bodies.

Shortcomings

The limitation on the outside play area, and the need to set up and put away every piece of equipment at the beginning and end of sessions, limits the number and effectiveness of the relevant activities. Because of this, the opportunities for children to use large equipment and toys as part of their daily learning are limited and, as a result, there has been little development of the skills associated with their use.

3.6 Creative development

The standards in creative development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The children enjoy singing and reciting verses and rhymes and often use relevant movements when performing them. They use a range of instruments to imitate common sounds, eg the sound of a saw and a cement mixer after visiting a building site. The children have broader experiences through the music and movement activities provided when the group has use of the school hall.

They enjoy role-play in the activity areas by using language that is suitable to the situation. The majority of children are able to choose clothes and equipment suited to the characters.

The children's artistic skills are developing through daily experiences with a range of materials, both within and outside the classroom. A number of children are able to produce realistic pictures of people, buildings etc. by choosing their materials independently.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.0 The quality of the educational provision

The quality of the educational provision for 3-4 year-olds and 4-5 year-olds

4.1 Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The quality of the provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The organisation of the Cylch is based on clear principles. The need for courtesy and respect is emphasised and these aspects are apparent in the children's behaviour. Good activities are praised and children are encouraged to be considerate of other children's feelings. Good use is made of periods such as snack time and tidying up time to develop the children's social skills.

Experiences are provided to raise the children's awareness of other cultures and how such children's lives can differ from theirs.

The children say grace before their snack and recite a short prayer before leaving at the end of the session. The opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving was taken when pursuing the theme of 'The Autumn'.

The children are regularly introduced to a range of Welsh lullabies, poems and folk tales and children from non Welsh-speaking homes come to understand and to use Welsh easily under the sensitive guidance of the staff.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.2 Quality of planning for children's learning

Good features outweigh shortcomings.

Good features

Planning for the medium term is done on the basis of themes that are suited to the children's age. The themes pursued this term include 'Fi fy hun' (Me myself), 'Yr Hydref' (The Autumn), 'Sali Mali' a 'Fy nhŷ i' (My house). The themes offer a range of experiences for the children across the six areas of learning.

In addition to the medium-term planning there is also weekly planning that focuses on specific tasks for the children to achieve under the guidance of adults. A number of continuous daily activities are planned which children can choose. The planning supports equality of access and children's Additional Learning Needs.

Shortcomings

Planning for the development of key skills, particularly language, speech and communication are not sufficiently apparent in the short-term planning.

Insufficient advantage is taken of opportunities for adults to intervene purposefully in activities or to steer specific activities with groups of children. There is also a tendency to plan an activity for the whole group and this limits the opportunities for extended responses by the children and the development of other linguistic skills.

4.3 Quality of teaching

The good features in the quality of teaching outweigh the shortcomings.

Good features

The staff create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for the children. The children feel at home in the Cylch and there was strong evidence from parents that the children are happy there. The staff are caring and are always on hand to comfort if necessary.

The good relationship between staff and children is a positive element of the learning, and the inclusive ethos that exists in the Cylch promotes equality and fair play for all. The staff's expectations in terms of behaviour are high. The staff also provide suitable models for the language of the children. The level of resources is satisfactory and of good quality and they are used to provide a range of activities to motivate, challenge and stimulate the children. As well as opportunities for children to work independently by choosing their activities, adult-led focus activities are organised as well as whole-group activities such as a story or singing. Effective use is made of unplanned opportunities such as the appearance of a rainbow when the children were arriving at the setting one morning. This develops aspects of their understanding of the world and their spiritual development through recognising the wonders of God.

All members of staff hold qualifications appropriate to their work and are experienced. They have undertaken the introduction of the Foundation Phase curriculum in a professional manner and are developing a good understanding of its requirements. All members of staff attended the training programme provided by the Children and Young People's Partnership. A student has been placed in the Cylch and appropriate opportunities are provided for her to develop professionally and to contribute to the provision. The staff work very well together as a team. Valuable support is given by the support teacher employed by the Local Authority.

Shortcomings

The question and answer methods used by adults do not always reinforce the children's learning. The intervention by the adults in children's play is inadequate in terms of developing their language patterns in Welsh.

4.4 Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports for parents and carers

Good features outweigh shortcomings

A new procedure for assessing and recording progress was established at the beginning of the current year to match the Foundation Phase. An Observations Book is kept in respect of every child and a record is kept of development against specific criteria. Additional comments are recorded on 'post it' notes. The procedure also provides an opportunity to note actions that have been identified for further development. In due course, it is intended that the data on individual children will build up into a useful profile which records their progress, as well as providing valuable information for the purpose of planning their work.

Parents have various opportunities to receive information about the organisation of the Cylch and about the children's activities and experiences. A short newsletter is provided at the beginning of every theme which gives a general outline of the activities planned and invites parents to contribute in any way they can. There is a notice board in the foyer and this is used effectively to relay information to the parents. Occasionally, an open morning is held during which parents have the opportunity to spend time in the Cylch watching the children working and have discussions with staff. The children regularly take work home with them.

Shortcomings

The use of the new assessment procedure is developing but has not, as yet, ensured systematic assessments of children's progress. It does not feed effectively into the planning process. An assessment of children's prior attainment by seeking information from parents/carers is not undertaken when they start in the Cylch.

Although parents receive good information about the Cylch's arrangements and the children's activities, the quality of information shared with parents about their children's progress needs to improve

4.5 Quality of the relationship with parents, carers and the community

There are good features with some outstanding features in the quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community.

Outstanding features

The quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community are exceptional. The Cylch encourages them to play an active role in the life of the setting and a very good response is received for every request for assistance. The Cylch makes very effective use of the expertise of parents when planning activities for the children.

Since the beginning of this term, a visit by a nurse supported the children's understanding of caring for others during the theme of 'Fi fy Hun' (Me myself) and seeing a builder mixing cement and building a wall motivated a number of practical activities by the children. When staff and children made bread at Thanksgiving, a baker volunteered to undertake further activities. Use is also made of the wider community as a resource, such as the link established with the local library and the relationship developed with a local builder when developing the 'Fy nhŷ i' (My house) theme.

Good features

Parents indicated strongly that they found it easy to approach a member of staff to ask a question or to discuss any child-related concern. The evidence was equally strong that parents believed their children to be happy in the Cylch and that the support and care they received, including the support and care for Additional Learning Needs, was very good.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to the children's wellbeing

The contribution to the children's wellbeing is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

There are suitable procedures available to ensure the children's welfare and safety. There are secure arrangements for receiving and releasing children at the beginning and the end of every session and suitable risk assessments of activities are undertaken regularly. An accident book is kept to record relevant events.

An appropriate child protection policy exists and the staff are aware of the procedures to be followed should issues arise. A range of other policies have been adopted which contribute towards children's welfare, such as protection from the sun, keeping children from wandering, health and safety and taking photographs. All members of staff have received the appropriate CRB checks and they all have suitable qualifications in first aid.

Every care is taken to promote the health and welfare of children. Fruit and milk are provided during every snack and high levels of hygiene are constantly maintained.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.7 Quality of the leadership and management of the setting

The quality of the leadership and management of the setting is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Cylch Meithrin Corn Hir is a member of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin from which valuable guidance on procedural and management issues is available. The Management Committee comprises parents and members of staff, and it meets regularly. The present committee is supportive and sustaining. There is a good relationship with the local Children and Young People's Partnership and valuable support is received from the relevant members of the Local Authority's early years' team.

The staff are appraised annually and they receive relevant training through the county programme.

The present leader has been in post for about six months. During this period, she has led the Cylch's move to a new site as well as leading them through the adoption of the Foundation Phase. This was achieved effectively without any detrimental effect on the quality of the provision. A new relationship was created with the school and it is intended to develop further the extent to which resources can be shared. The level and quality of the current resources are good and the staff make effective use of them.

The Cylch recently adopted a self-evaluation procedure. This has already provided beneficial management information about those things which are done well and those matters that require further attention. The leader is in the process of drawing up an action plan to respond to the relevant matters.

Shortcomings

There were no important shortcomings

4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing key matters for action identified in the last inspection report

The requirements relating to reporting to parents have changed since the last inspection report. The response to the report has been good.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs:

- 1 to seek information from parents/carers about their children's ability and skills when they begin in the group and build on the existing assessment procedure:
 - a) to make better use of observations on individual children when planning for them; and
 - b) to record their progress more effectively;
- 2 to take greater advantage of opportunities for purposeful intervention by adults during continuous activities;
- 3 to further develop procedures for reporting to parents about their children's progress; and
- 4 to further develop the use of the external area to promote standards across the six areas of learning.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or within 45 working days if it is necessary to translate the plan either into Welsh or from Welsh into English, and demonstrate how they will tackle the matters noted above. The action plan must be given to every parent / carer who has a child in the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chairperson of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or the Children and Young People's Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.