



*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 Ynysybwl  
Glyn Street  
Ynysybwl  
Pontypridd  
CF37 3DS**

**Date of inspection: June 2012**

**by**

**Eifion R Morgan**

**Reporting Inspector**

**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 school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Ynysybwl is located in the vestry and accompanying rooms of a local Chapel. Ynysybwl is a typical valley community, some 4 miles north of Pontypridd.

The entrance hall which is around the side of the chapel opens into a sizeable room which is warm and airy. A notable feature of the room is the excellent use made of all available space to provide a wide range of experiences for the children, in keeping with the philosophy of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There are, for example, designated areas for reading, writing, number work, creative and exploratory activities.

Beyond this room and in addition to the outside, the Nursery has added a wellconstructed covered area which is fully enclosed and so providing children with warm, dry facilities whatever the weather. This area comprises wet play areas and further exploratory and role play areas. This room opens to the front paved area of the chapel and is the main access for parents and children. This paved area is secure and provides an outside play area for the children under supervision. There are also toilet and hand washing facilities and a small kitchen where snacks are prepared incorporated into the main building. The main building also provides a small staffroom and facilities for storing confidential records and holding private meetings when necessary.

A notable recent acquisition is an allotment which provides valuable experiences for the children in terms of a wild life area and raised beds for growing seeds and plants. This area is in the process of being developed.

The majority of children come from the locality, although a few come from further afield in order to benefit from the high quality provision provided by the Nursery. The local area comprises largely of terraced housing and has areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Part of the community is recognised as a community first area and children from this area benefit from the "Flying Start" provision provided by the Cylch. There is an occasional child from a minority ethnic background and a number of children admitted each year show different and differing special educational needs.

All children come from English speaking homes and whilst a few parents have attended Welsh secondary schools, the language of the home is invariably English. Children attend the Cylch following their second birthday. Parents are encouraged to visit prior to their child starting at the Cylch and subsequently to accompany their child to settle them down initially. Initial contact with the Cylch enables the staff to be aware of any disability the child may have and this becomes an important feature in the child's educational provision. Children leave the Cylch at some time following their third birthday, dependent on places being available in the local Welsh language school.

Currently there are 22 children are on the morning register, 10 of whom are aged 3, of whom 6 are funded. Nineteen children are on the afternoon register, all under the age of 3 years. The Cylch has been registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, (CSSIW) to accept a maximum of 24 children.

The Cylch is a Welsh medium provision and has been awarded a “Cylch Ragorol” status by the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

The Cylch was previously inspected by CSSIW in Septemebr 2010. There were no important recommendations. Estyn has not previously inspected the Cylch.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

#### Excellent features

- \* The impact of leadership on standards, children's progress and the learning experiences provided for the children.
- \* The quality of management.
- \* The provision for ensuring children's wellbeing.
- \* The provision for children's care, support and guidance.
- \* Partnership with parents and other professional organisations.

#### Good features

- \* Standards achieved and the progress made by all children.
- \* The quality of planning to meet children's needs and to develop their skills.
- \* The quality of assessment and its use in planning for individual needs.
- \* The range and quality of teaching and the use made of children's ideas in planning.
- \* The good use of space and resources available for children to use.

### Prospects for improvement

#### Excellent features

- \* The dynamic and innovative leadership style adopted by the leader.
- \* The impact of leadership on all aspects of the provision, including supporting the staff.
- \* Flexibility and openness to new ideas.
- \* Track record of improvement.
- \* Recognition by outside organisations that the Cylch is an exemplar of good

practice.

- \* Clear accurate self-evaluation and realistic achievable developmental plans.

Good features

- \* Ability and commitment of the staff to work together for the benefit of the children.
- \* Attendance at relevant professional courses.
- \* Openness of staff to new ideas and their ability to evaluate change.

## Recommendations

The setting needs to

- \* maintain its current commitment to produce the very best experiences for the children.
- \* continue to develop children's competence in the Welsh language and further involve their parents as partners in children's learning. \*\*
- \* further develop the recently acquired allotment. \*\*

NOTE \*\* Identified by the Cylch in its developmental plans.

### What happens next?

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

Estyn will invite the Cylch to prepare a written case study describing the excellent practice identified in the inspection.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

Children's progress and achievement is Good.

Children start at the Cylch with very different knowledge, skills and understanding but the innovative and imaginative teaching is highly effective in motivating all children. All children achieve well in relation to their ability and prior learning and make good progress in both their academic and social development.

Children's linguistic ability on entry is very variable and their competence in the Welsh language is practically non-existent. However, being immersed in the Welsh language and through the commitment of all adults, children are developing their competence to the extent that most will be sufficiently competent to progress to Welsh language primary schools.

Overall, children's communication skills are developing well, enabling them to make themselves understood and showing a developing understanding of the Welsh language. They understand more of the language than they speak. Children enjoy and participate enthusiastically in Welsh songs and nursery rhymes and particularly enjoy action songs. They enjoy stories and many children are beginning to look at books.

Most children practice mark making, using chalk outside on walls and floor, and pencil and paper on their writing table. More able children show that they know the purpose of writing.

Children's numeracy skills are developing well and many count accurately to 3 and beyond. More able children recognise basic shapes, including triangles, circles and squares and match different shapes. These children are beginning to use mathematical language such as long and short, full and empty.

All children use computers and digital cameras indicating their basic understanding of technology. Children also use magnifying glasses in their observations of mini-beasts.

Overall, children experience a wide range of learning activities that help to develop their motor skills – the majority use scissors competently to make shapes such as houses and paint using different colours to produce different shades.

A particularly good feature of children's learning, as highlighted by parents, is their developing communication and language skills and their increasing use of the Welsh language.



## **Wellbeing: Excellent**

All children show a positive attitude to their learning and partake enthusiastically in all experiences provided for them in the Cylch. Children, whatever their ability and background, show interest in their work and this is well illustrated in their sustained concentration and commitment to the task in hand. Working in their outside environment illustrated this very well where individual children pursued their particular interests and were happy to show their friends what they had found. These young children relate very well to each other, showing consideration for each others feelings and co-operating on tasks. An outstanding feature was children's enthusiasm shown on reaching the Cylch in the morning and their eagerness to engage in tasks and activities set out for them. These are outstanding features.

Virtually all children know how they can keep healthy, for example, washing their hands before eating food. Morning snacks are social occasions where children show tolerance and help each other. They converse happily with each other enjoying each others company. Children are completely free from verbal and any form of physical abuse and feel totally safe.

Children's wellbeing is the result of the staff's holistic view of children's wellbieng whatever their background or particular needs. Overall this ensures an outstanding and exceptional participation by children, their enjoyment in learning and in their atittudes to keeping healthy.

The Cylch is actively involved in many aspects of community life which bring children and adults together in the life of the locality.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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## **Learning experiences: Good**

The Cylch provides children with a rich and lively curriculum that stimulates children to take part and which successfully maintains their interests. The learning experiences are well focused on ensuring children's progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. The curriculum builds successfully on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Planning is a collaborative exercise involving both staff and children. Activities are well-focused on providing activities that challenge the children and successfully devleop their independence and confidence in learning. In collaborative working children relate well to each other and show respect.

Activities are purposefully designed to develop all aspects of children's learning. There is an appropriate focus on developing children's literacy skills, particularly their acquisition of the Welsh language, numeracy and information technology skills, as well as on their physical and creative skills. Work in the outside environment focuses on living things and children show they know such aspects of life cycles, as when one child told the visitor that ..." the egg contains a young chick that will hatch out".

Studies such as of Divali help children to begin to develop an understanding of the world. Studies of Welsh celebrations extend their knowledge of the traditions and culture of Wales.

Good opportunities are provided for children to learn about sustainability and recycling. Growing seeds and plants gives children an insight into the necessary materials for growing such as .."horse poo and water helps plant to grow". Recycling involves separating different materials depending upon their properties.

### **Teaching: Good**

All staff have a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and an up to date understanding knowledge of child development. A notable and excellent feature is the staff's high expectations of all children, whatever their ability and prior achievement. Clear assessment of the child's ability and the use of the "key worker" system enables children to develop to their full potential in that individual children, whatever their needs, can be targeted for specific teaching.

There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed and led activities across the curriculum. Children's needs are met flexibly and individual children's needs are taken into account.

All staff are actively involved, are enthusiastic and committed to their role and to develop children to their full potential. They are in themselves good role models, they have made every effort to learn Welsh and use the language in their dealings with children. This enables the children to be totally immersed in the Welsh language. Children are well managed using, where necessary, positive behaviour strategies. Staff are sensitive to children's individual needs and expectations and respond appropriately. Adults use questioning to challenge children, such as when developing their thinking skills

Children are regularly and routinely assessed and observations recorded. A good aspect of assessment is the use made of the outcomes of assessment when planning future activities. This ensures that tasks are well matched to children's needs and interests but also to highlight the support needed by individual children, including the more able and talented. In the main, assessment comments are useful but tend to be descriptive and, at times, focus insufficiently on the skills element of children's progress.

Parents are well aware of their children's progress and have suitable opportunities to see the work they have been doing.

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

The provision for children's health and wellbeing, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and highly effective. The noteworthy and exceptional provision is demonstrated in the Cylch's holistic approach to the care and guidance of the children incorporating the close interplay between all partners. The Cylch provides guidance and well supported evidence to the specialist services involved and ensure that good use is made of the professional services. Informative

correspondence from such services indicate that the setting has collaborated its findings and relevant evidence was always made available to support individual children.

Parents are actively involved at each stage from the pre-Cylch stage to the transfer phase to the next phase in the child's education. Whilst, at times, hard facts have to be presented, parents invariably are appreciative of the Cylch's support.

The Cylch has well established and appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children. All staff have received relevant training and the Cylch's leader is the person responsible for child protection.

Procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008.

The Cylch successfully develops children's sense of curiosity about the world around them. The day-to-day activities successfully foster values such as honesty, fairness and ensuring that children know right from wrong. The Cylch successfully helps children to take responsibility and to be part of their community.

Children identified with additional learning needs have full access to all areas of learning. They have individual help when necessary and work is well matched to their ability and prior attainment. There is regular contact with appropriate external agencies. Such agencies are appreciative of the Cylch's detailed analysis of the child's needs and their ability to undertake follow-up activities. Contact with such external agencies as the educational psychologist, speech therapists and social services is seen by the Cylch as part of the support provided for such children and not an end in itself. In the same way children's time at the Cylch and the support they get is seen as part of their long term education.

Parents are regularly consulted and involved in decisions concerning their children and the Cylch reports that it regularly supports such parents in interviews with external agencies.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The Nursery is a fully inclusive community where all children have equality of access to activities and areas of learning. A very good aspect is the respect children have for each other, and the staff's knowledge and understanding of each child's particular needs. Staff are experienced and well qualified and many have been part of the team for a number of years. All display a full understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum and take an active part in planning and teaching. They create a stimulating environment for learning.

Resources are of good quality and accessible to the children. Activity areas are well focused on providing opportunities for children to progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.

The accommodation has been supplemented by a well constructed outside facility that is an attractive learning environment for the children. The developing allotment also provides valuable experiences for the children.

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

The Cylch benefits from outstanding dynamic and innovative leadership that sets very high expectations of both staff and children. Such expectations are fully realised in practice.

A clear sense of purpose pervades all aspects of the work of the Cylch directly focused on providing the best possible provisions for the children. The leadership style is infectious and encourages staff to be creative and inventive and to take on responsibility. The leader seeks every opportunity to develop her staff professionally by ensuring, for example, attendance on relevant courses and evaluating how such information can be incorporated into the work of the Cylch.

Currently and over the last few years the leader has grasped every opportunity to improve the setting and the provision for children's learning. The current provision is highly imaginative, having developed from rather basic accommodation provided by the local chapel. However, in no way is she complacent and has well constructed plans to develop further.

The above attributes show her imaginative and creative skills and are complimented by the leader's personal skills in getting the staff working exceptionally well as a team and incorporating parents and the community.

The leader is and has made the most of opportunities to involve the Cylch in community and local authority events and her contribution is well recognised. The Cylch is also active in National and local priorities and initiatives. The Cylch is also active in National and local initiatives. This has included being actively involved in, for example, the Multilingualism Educational Transition (MELT) project; Dechran Deg bookstart; Flying Start initiative; Child development and assessment profile (CDAP) and currently the amended RCT child development profile tracker; Mudiad Meithrin Iaith Syflaenol and piloting the use of the Early Support materials for children with additional learning needs.

Planning the curriculum is done co-operatively with all staff contributing ideas. Children's ideas are incorporated and "key staff" make provision for children in their care. This includes providing extension work for the more able and talented and reviewing the work for children having additional needs. In this way, children, whatever their ability, are challenged and ensures that their full potential is achieved.

Staff work exceptionally well as a team and new staff are quickly assimilated into the group. New staff are mentored and have an induction period. All staff (including the leader) are appraised annually. In discussion staff professional needs are discussed and planned for.

Links with parents are highly effective, helpful and contribute substantially to children's learning.

The management committee works effectively and are well informed about the work of the Cylch. They fully fulfil their legal duties.

### **Improving quality: Excellent**

The Cylch has been highly successful in improving the facilities and the provision for children's learning. The current facilities illustrate the progress that has been made, including erecting under cover provision, and the exceptional use that is being made of all available space. Plans are also in place to provide additional accommodation for staff so that the current staff room can be used to provide other activity areas for the children. Plans are also in place to provide accommodation for parents to meet and to partake in Welsh learning courses. This illustrates how the Cylch is planning to work with the parents and outside organisations.

Overall, the current provision illustrates the success of past self-evaluation and the fruition of developmental plans over several years. It shows how areas for improvement were prioritised and strategies for improvement implemented and evaluated. The Cylch has also an imaginative vision for the future. These are outstanding attributes and have resulted in positive gains for the children.

Parents are and have been actively involved, such as erecting shelves outside the back door.

A notable and outstanding feature of the Cylch is the emphasis set on staff professional development. Needs are clearly identified in its appraisal procedures and well focused on children's needs. A very worthwhile aspect is the measuring of the impact of training in terms of improving the provision for children.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The Cylch takes a holistic view of child development and the partnerships established with the parents and external agencies is fundamental to this.

Before children begin at the Cylch parents visit as often as they wish and experience the different activities. This is also an opportunity for the Cylch staff to familiarise themselves with the needs of the individual child. This involves discussion with any of the specialist services previously involved with the family and devising a plan of action where necessary. All prospective parents receive a "Welcoming Pack" which provides them with useful information.

Parents and carers have regular contact with the staff of the Cylch with particular reference to the leader and relevant "key worker".

The Cylch is vigilant of any additional needs and a good and worthwhile feature as noted by members of the professional services involved is the careful detailed records available in the Cylch concerning children suspected of having additional needs. According to the specialist services, this provides excellent evidence where needed. Similarly such services refer to the Cylch's readiness to put into place programmes of support for individual children.

Parents are kept fully involved. When necessary Cylch staff will support a parent in case meetings. Several parents have been very appreciative of such support.

The Cylch has good links with the local primary schools and ensures that the support provided for individual children accompanies them to their next stage of education.

The trust and clear communication between staff and professional agencies, and fully involving parents in decisions about their children is an outstanding feature of the Cylch.

The Cylch is recognised locally as an exemplar of good practice. It has collaborated with other nurseries in the local authority to give advice, to enable colleagues to visit and to organise specific courses. The Cylch also has very effective links with the Mudiad Ysgolon Meithrin.

Staff have therefore had opportunities to become involved in professional learning communities and making significant contributions to Nursery education.

### **Resource management: Good**

Practitioners are effectively deployed and their expertise well used. They are well qualified and make good use of professional development courses to update their skills. Staff are highly effective in motivating children to learn, particularly in developing their language skills.

Staff are good at evaluating the impact of resources on learning and plan for future resource needs effectively within their financial constraints.

The recently acquired outdoor area is a valuable addition in terms of its potential to develop children's skills across all areas of learning and particularly communication skills and knowledge of their environment. Currently the outdoor area is under-developed but plans are in place to involve parents in this work.

The Cylch has been highly successful in attracting financial help. Resources are very well used and overall the Cylch provides very good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Pre-inspection questionnaires and discussion with a sample of parents leaving their children for the morning session indicated their total satisfaction with the Cylch and with its staff.

Ten replies were received, none disagreed with any of the positive statements in the questionnaire, In summary, the results of the questionnaires were as follows.

90% strongly agreed with the statements:

- (i) Overall I am satisfied with the setting.
- (ii) My child likes this settling.
- (iii) My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.
- (iv) Teaching is good.
- (v) Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.
- (vi) My child is safe at the setting.
- (vii) My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.
- (iix) I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.
- (ix) My child is well prepared for moving on to school.
- (x) The setting is well run.

80% strongly agreed with the statements:

- (i) My child is making good progress at the setting.
- (ii) Children behave well in the setting.
- (iii) I am kept well informed about my child's progress.

70% strongly agreed with the statements:

- (i) My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.

- (ii) I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.
- (iii) There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.

### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children, in conversation, said that they were very happy and very much enjoyed coming to the nursery. They enjoyed the activities they did, particularly exploring outside. They said that the staff helped them whenever they needed help and they enjoyed the story telling and the singing.



## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	Reporting Inspector
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### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))