



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 y Ffor
Safle Ysgol Bro Plenydd
Canolfan Y Ffor
Y Ffor
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 6UP**

Date of inspection: March 2012

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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About the setting

The Cylch Meithrin is located in the community hall in the small village of Ffor in Gwynedd. It is a rural village on the A499, some 3 miles north of Pwllheli.

The Cylch provides early years education through the medium of Welsh and is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate up to 24 children in the main room. An adjacent room is also registered by the CSSIW for a maximum of 16 children. This room is used when the local primary school request to use the hall. There are 10 children on roll, 7 of whom are aged 3 years. Five children are currently funded.

Children attending the Cylch come from the village and from nearby villages and the surrounding rural community. Most children come from homes where the mother tongue is Welsh. The others come from homes where one parent is Welsh speaking. None come from homes where no Welsh is spoken and none come from homes that are disadvantaged socio-economically.

No child currently is from an ethnic minority background and none have been identified as having additional learning needs. However, the Cylch welcomes children whatever their background or ability and such children have attended in the past. The Cylch is vigilant in noting any child with potential needs and works closely with parents in such instances to ensure that the child receives the necessary support.

Children attend the Cylch from the age of 2 years and leave for the next phase of their education in the September following their 3rd birthday. The Cylch works closely with the transfer primary school which is adjacent to the Cylch. This facilitates the transfer of the children as the school's Nursery teacher is well known to the children at the Cylch. The school reports that children who have attended the Cylch settle down very quickly in their new environment.

The community hall used by the Cylch is in a modern, recently decorated building. The outside door which is kept locked opens into a spacious hallway. There is a notice board which displays useful information for parents that they can see when bringing their children to the Cylch or when collecting them. The two rooms used by the Cylch open off this hallway. There are toilets, including a disabled toilet.

The main room which is the community hall is large, spacious and warm and is suitably differentiated into activity areas well designed to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. A small kitchen opens to one side of the hallway. There is no immediate access to the outside for children to use during free play but children use the school's facilities and this includes yard space for use of large toys, a field with play facilities. Since this hall is used by the community, equipment has to be stored away at the end of each session.

The Cylch meets on 5 mornings of the week (8.45 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.) during school term times.

A report on Cylch Meithrin y Ffor
March 2012

The Cylch was last inspected by CSSIW in November 2011 and all minor recommendations have been addressed. The Cylch has not been previously inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

Excellent features

- The leadership plans and oversees a highly imaginative learning environment.
- The quality of relationships is exceptional and successfully supports children's personal and academic development.

Good features

- Children's achievement and progress in learning across all areas of learning.
- Children's communication skills and their enjoyment of learning, particularly their enjoyment of stories and looking at books.
- The range of learning experiences provided for the children.
- The use of assessment in planning so that tasks are well matched to children's needs.
- The provision for children's wellbeing, including their care, moral and social development.
- The Cylch's inclusive, tolerant ethos, free of any oppressive behaviour.
- Self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- Support provided by the Local Authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin development officer.

Prospects for improvement

Excellent features

- The innovative leadership that clearly establishes high expectations and sets challenging targets in terms of children's personal and academic development.
- The positive ethos displayed in the Cylch and the willingness to incorporate new ideas.

Good features

- Self-evaluation strategies and the planning to secure improvement.
- Attendance at professional development courses and implementing ideas.
- Support provided by Local Authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin development officer.
- Close working relationships with transfer primary school.

Recommendations

The Cylch needs to be vigilant of new ideas in order to maintain the current high standards seen during the inspection.

What happens next?

The Cylch will continue to plan and provide the high quality provision currently provided for the children.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children achieve good standards and make consistently good and sometimes very good progress in all areas of learning. All children are fully involved in activities; they show that they think about their tasks, make choices and work diligently. They particularly enjoy looking at story books which they often do in their free time.

Children's linguistic skills are particularly good. They have excellent listening skills and a notable and good feature is their enjoyment of story time. They listen intently to stories and are eager to answer questions. They enjoy singing, particularly action songs and express their feelings in their responses.

All children are beginning to make marks and experiment with chalk and felt-tip pens. They know some of the functions of writing, as when using notepads for their recordings.

Many children use mathematical language purposefully, such as naming shapes, including triangles, squares and circles. Several children were able to say that a square has 4 sides. Many children sequence objects, such as colour markers on a thread.

Most children are beginning to use technology such as mobile phones in their play. They control battery operated toys, such as bee-bot, and are familiar with the use of switches on equipment, such as CD players.

All children enjoy role play and this successfully stimulates their language development. Their creative work involves colour mixing, use of shapes and hand prints. Their fine motor skills are progressing well enabling them to use scissors, paint and glue brushes. Children also enjoy physical activity, such as floor exercises to make different shapes.

Wellbeing: Good

A good and significant aspect of the Cylch is children's enjoyment and participation in learning. All children behave very well and show a positive attitude to learning. They show a commendable interest in tasks set out for them and the ability to make choices. They have the ability to work independently for substantial periods of time but they are quite capable of working in small groups and co-operate well with each other. In such instances, they are courteous and relate well to each other and to adults.

The children are developing an appropriate understanding of basic health issues commensurate with their ages. They know the importance of having clean hands and know some of the foods that keep them healthy.

All children feel safe and free from abuse at the Cylch and this is a significant factor in development their self-confidence.

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

All children benefit from innovative and exciting activities that successfully engage all children. Learning experiences successfully enable children to progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes.

Relationships between children and adults are excellent and are highlighted in the respect children show for each other and adults. The Cylch provides children with a safe, supportive environment that enables all children to be confident and display their independence and individuality.

An excellent and very worthwhile inclusion in the curriculum are the activities that involve the children working with their parents over a period of time in the Cylch. Through language, games songs and play activities it shows parents what they can do in ordinary situations to stimulate and support their child's development. This provides very good support for children's personal and academic development.

Children's basic skills, notably their literacy skills, are developing very well. Virtually all children have a good command of the Welsh language and are familiar with some of the traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales.

Children have opportunities to see how living things are cared for including young animals, such as young lambs brought into the Cylch for them to see. Studies of other countries such as China and the Chinese New Year and associated customs help children to appreciate other societies.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a very good understanding of child development and understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Staff have high expectations of all children and this is realised in practice. There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-led activities, both indoors and outdoors. A very good feature is children's behaviour. Adults treat children with respect and this is reciprocated by the children. Children are actively involved in helping adults and feel part of the learning environment. No instances of adults needing to intervene unnecessarily in children's activities were seen during the inspection. Adults are themselves good language models and an excellent feature of the teaching is the leader's story telling. In these instances children are captivated by the stories and their faces show their enjoyment. Story time never fails to capture their imagination.

Practitioners work together well and they were very well supported by a colleague undergoing training who makes a valuable contribution to childrens learning.

Children are assessed regularly and observations recorded. Recordings include reference to what was seen (with reference to the 6 areas of learning), date, person recording and possible way forward. In addition each child has a booklet detailing his/her achievement.

Staff know the children well and are well aware of the next steps in children's learning. This ensures that children's skills are developed progressively and re-enforced when necessary. Activities are planned to meet children's needs and interests and parents are kept up to date on their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for promoting children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and sometimes very good.

The Cylch provides children with a warm, supportive working environment that effectively fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect. Day-to-day activities develop children's social skills and help them distinguish between right and wrong.

The Cylch is very effective in developing children's personal skills, developing their independence and when appropriate their ability to work and play together. They show good levels of tolerance and respect for each other. This is a very good aspect of the Cylch's work. Children are eager to help adults and seek opportunities to become involved. The curriculum is broad and balanced and children have good opportunities to appreciate the world they live in and of people that help them.

Practitioners know their children well. Through regular appraisal of children's progress they are vigilant in identifying any child with potential additional needs. No child currently present has been identified with such needs but systems are in place to involve local professional services if required. There are effective links with specialist agencies and the Cylch recognises the need to involve parents at each stage.

The Cylch has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children. The Cylch leader is the named member with responsibility for dealing with child protection. All staff have had recent and appropriate training.

Procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008).

Learning environment: Good

The exceptional quality of relationships evident in the Cylch successfully supports children's development, particularly their personal and social development. Children's confidence and independence are well above expectations.

The Cylch has a fully inclusive ethos providing equal access to the curriculum for all children. A tolerant supportive atmosphere pervades the setting and this ensures that all children and staff are free from harassment or subject to oppressive behaviour. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure equality for all, and complaints procedures are in place but have never been needed.

The Cylch is sufficiently staffed by individuals who have relevant and appropriate qualifications. They have very good experiences of caring for children and the Cylch currently benefits from the presence of a person undergoing training whose contribution is valued and appreciated by the children.

Resources are suitable and sufficient to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and are well matched to the needs of the children. Due to the hall being a community hall, equipment has to be stored away at the end of each session. Good quality wall displays however remain. There is no immediate outside area allowing children to choose when to play outside. However, the spacious hall allows for group physical activities and the Cylch benefits from using the school yard and field. The local environment, including visits to the village, enhances children's perceptions of the world around them.

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

The Cylch benefits from outstanding leadership. It provides the setting with clear direction and a sense of purpose. Leadership has promoted and sustains a highly effective quality of provision for the children.

Staff understand their roles and share values, aims and objectives focused on learning, behaviour and relationships. Both staff and children feel valued and their opinions and views respected.

Time is well managed with an excellent mix of adult-led and directed activities and time for children to work independently. This represents outstanding planning of the morning activities. An outstanding ethos pervades the Cylch typified by high expectations of all children.

It is within this context that children work and play demonstrating a high degree of independence in their knowledge that they can seek help whenever needed.

This provides the support for children to develop individually and the confidence to express themselves. Overall, the leadership provides the framework within which the outstanding learning experiences children experience are set, leading to the good and sometimes very good outcomes.

Children engage in highly imaginative activities that are well matched to their needs. Children are fully involved in activities and this active involvement and their willingness to help eliminates any form of poor behaviour.

Children are confident and self-assured and active participants in their learning.

There is an effective system of monitoring and evaluating outcomes and making improvements where necessary. Very good links have been established with parents/carers and other partners.

Overall this represents exceptional leadership and the consequent high standards of the educational provision.

There is an effective management committee who have the necessary experience to evaluate the provision. They are well informed about the performance of the Cylch and supportive of the staff. The management committee have taken account of the relevant legislation and fulfil their legal duties.

The Cylch has taken good account of national priorities, such as implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum and local priorities, such as “healthy eating” initiatives.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know the Cylch well. Strengths and areas for development are recognised in the self-evaluation document. The Cylch has been vigilant in maintaining good practice and implementing improvements where possible. There is a positive culture of bringing about improvements when possible and of implementing new ideas. Ideas gained from attendance at professional training courses have been implemented and have resulted in improved provision for the children. The Cylch takes into account the views of parents and other partners and in particular the support it derives from the transfer primary school. The Cylch has also shared their experiences with other settings. There is ample evidence to indicate that over the years provision has improved with the subsequent standards of children’s achievement.

Partnership working: Good

The Cylch works well with parents who themselves are very supportive of the Cylch. Initiatives designed to show parents how they can support their children’s learning have been very effective and much appreciated by parents. The activities have given parents very good ideas as to what they can do in the home when undertaking ordinary activities to support children’s learning and to strengthen parent-child relationships. Parents are actively involved in decisions concerning their children. There are good links in place with the transfer primary school who appreciate the high standards in both personal and academic development apparent in children coming from the Cylch.

Very good links are in place with the Local Authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin development officer. The Cylch is appreciative of the help and support they have provided in terms of improving the quality of education provided.

Overall there is trust and clear communication between partners.

Resource management: Good

Staff are well deployed and through working together know their roles and responsibilities. Resources are well used to motivate children to learn. Although resources have to be cleared away at the end of the morning, each session is well organised with activity areas supporting the Foundation Phase curriculum. This impacts well on children's learning.

The outdoors is well used to support children's learning. Overall the Cylch gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

All parents agreed with the following statements in the parent questionnaires:

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

* *My child is well prepared for moving on to school*

There is a good range of activities including trips or visits

* *The setting is well run.*

* More than three-quarters of the respondents strongly agreed with these statements.

Comments made by parents indicated the support children have in the Cylch, their enjoyment and the good range of activities for children.

Responses to discussions with children

All children are happy to come to the Cylch and this is confirmed by their parents in discussion. Children show a sense of excitement as they enter the Cylch and are soon actively involved in the activities set out for them. They have the confidence to work independently and make choices. However, when the occasion arises, they play happily together. They particularly enjoy role play activities.

Children are very willing to help staff and several seek opportunities to do so. They have good personal skills, such as putting their coats and shoes on before going outside. They speak of their enjoyment at the Cylch and how adults always help them.

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

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.