



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 Yr Eifl
Y Ganolfan
Trefor
Gwynedd
LL54 5HP**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

About the setting

Cylch Meithrin yr Eifl is located in the community hall in Trefor. Trefor is a small rural village on the North Wales coast, some 15 miles south west of Caernarfon. It is a Welsh medium Cylch and all the children come from homes where the mother tongue is Welsh. Currently there are 17 children on roll, 5 of whom are aged 3 years, and 4 of these are funded.

Children come from typical Welsh rural backgrounds and none are from homes that are socio-economically disadvantaged. None are from minority ethnic communities and none have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). The Cylch however, is happy to accept children whatever their background or ability.

Children are able to attend the Cylch from age 2 years and move on to the next stage of their education in the September following their 3rd birthday. This, in most instances, is the village primary school.

The setting comprises a small entrance hall leading into the main hall. Opening from the main teaching room are toilets with washing facilities and a small kitchen. The hall is well lit, warm and suitably differentiated into activity areas. Being a community hall has the disadvantage to the Cylch in that activity areas have to be cleared away at the end of each session. However, it does provide sufficient space for the children to play on large toys and tricycles.

The outside is not used at present but the Cylch reports that finance is now available to develop a safe outside play area immediately accessible from the main room.

The Cylch is open during school term times from 9.15 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. on each weekday.

The Cylch has only recently been registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and is awaiting their visitation and report. The Cylch was inspected by Estyn in 2002. However, many changes have taken place since then and the current co-leaders have only taken over the running of the Cylch since January 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

Good features

- Planning is well directed at ensuring that children progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes.
- Practitioners are good language models and use questioning well to develop children's language.
- All children are assessed regularly and observations recorded.
- Provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing, including child protection arrangements, are well established.
- The Cylch has an outstanding ethos that is fully inclusive where all children are valued as individuals.
- Behaviour is very good and children are learning to take responsibility.
- Staff work together very well and a sense of purpose is evident.

Adequate features

- There are no opportunities for children to have free access to the outside.
- Lack of opportunities for children to develop their computer skills.
- The results of assessment not sufficiently used in planning.
- Links to the transfer primary school are underdeveloped.

Prospects for improvement

Good features

- Both practitioners have worked together very well in the short time they have been in charge and this augurs well for the future.
- Staff have undertaken a good range of training courses and are receptive to change.
- Self-evaluation procedures are detailed and areas for development identified.
- Good support has been provided by the Local Authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin development officer.

Recommendations

In order to continue to improve the Cylch needs to:

- R1 develop the outside area so to extend the experiences available for the children. *
- R2 provide opportunities for the children to develop their computer skills. *
- R3 refine assessment procedures to focus on children's skill development so as to identify the next steps in learning.
- R4 use the information derived from assessment in planning so that tasks are well matched to children's stage of development and ability.
- R5 where possible, develop closer links with the primary school.

* This is recognised by the Cylch in their self-evaluation.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up a plan which shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Planning children's activities is done collaboratively and successfully engages all children. The learning experiences are well designed to encourage children to progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. Activities are innovative and are well matched to children's interests. A good and notable feature of the planned activities is how they encourage children to form relationships and to become tolerant of each other. The children are developing into confident individuals, capable of independent learning with a particularly good understanding of the world around them.

Activities are well focused on the rural environment in which they live and highlighted by local visits, such as seeing how young chicks are cared for and protected. Good opportunities are also provided for children to develop their physical and creative skills. The planning, however, does not always detail the way in which children's knowledge, understanding and skills are being developed progressively.

Planning ensures that there are good opportunities for children to acquire basic skills. All have very good listening skills, such as during story time. Children react promptly to suggestions and respond willingly to questions asked by the staff. Children's responses show that they are beginning to develop their thinking skills. They enjoy opportunities to look at books and handle books properly. The Cylch has a good supply of story books and cushions to sit on provide a comfortable area for reading. The hall is well differentiated into activity areas and each area has an "aide memoir" to remind staff of the opportunities each area presents to develop children's skills, notably their language development.

The language of the Cylch is Welsh and virtually all children speak the language naturally. There is a good focus on development children's language through discussion and well focused questioning. There is also a good emphasis on developing children's knowledge and understanding of some of the traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales.

Opportunities are also provided for children to understand about life in other countries and sustainability through growing plants.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners, through their experience of working with young children, have a good knowledge of child development. They also have an understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase in children's learning. All children are valued as individuals and their particular needs and expectations recognised. Staff have high expectations of children both in terms of the personal development and educational attainment. The staff actively support children in their activities yet allow children, at times, to work independently. Children are suitably challenged and enjoy the different activities. The Cylch radiates a homely, caring ethos where children behave very well. No instances were observed during the inspection where staff had to intervene in that children co-operated very well with each other.

Staff are good language models and this is reflected in the interaction between staff and children. Additional staff know their roles and make a very effective contribution to children's learning.

Children are regularly assessed and observations recorded. Observations describe children's achievements and are dated and are a good measure of children's progress. At best, records show what skills children have acquired and this is good practice. However, observations tend to be descriptive and do not indicate the next steps in individual children's learning. As such they are less useful in planning future activities that are well matched to children's ability.

Parents, in discussion, reported that their children were progressing well and being well prepared for the next stage in their education. However, more detailed reporting of their child's achievement and knowledge of the next steps in their learning would enable them to support the learning to a greater extent.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for developing children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Children benefit from a warm, homely, supportive environment that effectively fosters values such as fairness, honesty and respect for each other. The day-to-day activities help children distinguish between right and wrong and to develop an understanding of each other's needs.

Visits to the locality develop children's curiosity and sense of wonder about the world they live in and how young animals are cared for. Children are keen to help each other and adults and are beginning to take responsibility. Behaviour is very good and no occasion was seen during the inspection when staff needed to intervene. Children have opportunities to partake in some cultural activities, such as celebrations of St. David's Day.

The Cylch has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of the children. Staff have been delegated with responsibility for

dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues. Risk assessment is undertaken on a daily basis and before any outside visits. Staff have benefited from recent training and are well aware of what to look for and action to be undertaken if required. Procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008).

Staff regularly review children's progress. Policies and procedures are in place should any child be suspected of having additional learning needs. The Cylch is aware of how it can involve specialist services and recognise the need to keep parents fully involved. Whilst no children currently present has any additional learning needs, the Cylch is able to accept such children and provide the necessary support.

Learning environment: Good

An outstanding feature of the Cylch is the friendly, supportive atmosphere that prevails, resulting in children settling down quickly and showing pleasure in being at the Cylch. The setting is totally inclusive, offering all children equal access to all activities and through gentle persuasion ensures that all children take a full part.

Staff know the children's background and are sensitive to their particular needs. Staff successfully develop children's tolerant attitudes and they are totally free from any form of harassment. No instances were seen during the inspection of children being under stress or receiving less favourable treatment. Complaints procedures are in place but none have been needed.

The Cylch is appropriately staffed. Practitioners are appropriately qualified and experienced. Resources are sufficient and suitable to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The range of activities meet the needs of the children and sustain their interests. The accommodation, however, is used by other community organisations and this requires setting out and clearing equipment to one side after every session.

There is no provision for children to play outside but plans are in place and finance obtained to develop an outside play area adjacent to the side doors of the hall. This will provide the extra play activities that will enhance the provision for the children. Good use is made of the local environment to extend children's experiences.

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

Leadership: Good

The two practitioners share leadership responsibilities since their recent appointment and have assumed their roles well. They fully understand their roles and co-operate

well in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Cylch benefits from their clear direction, well focused on providing good quality provision for all the children. A sense of purpose is evident in their work and both staff look for ways of promoting and sustaining improvements.

A positive ethos pervades the Cylch focused on meeting children's needs and interests. Children are well managed and enjoy the warm supportive environment provided for them. Good links with parents have been established and parents find the staff approachable and helpful.

The management committee understand their roles and support the work of the Cylch. They fulfil their legal duties and meet regularly to discuss the work of the Cylch, as is evident from the minutes of the meetings. Staff appraisal is being undertaken.

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

Improving quality: Good

The Cylch has undertaken a detailed self-evaluation exercise and identified its strengths and areas for improvement. Areas for development are well directed at providing improved provision for the children. The planning of such improvement incorporates a realistic time scale and in obtaining the finance required. The proposed development of an outside play area for the children is a good and worthwhile addition to the current facilities. The location of the proposed play area is immediately adjacent to an exit from the hall. This will enable children to use the area as an extension to their internal working environment. It will also enable the Cylch to provide areas for looking after living things as well as supporting children's physical development.

Areas for improvement have been prioritised and all practitioners have been involved. Both practitioners have attended relevant professional development courses and such training has impacted well on children's progress and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

Parents are very supportive of the Cylch and appreciative of how well their children are developing, both personally and academically, particularly their language development. Parents reported, in discussion that the staff are always available to discuss their children's progress and are sensitive to children's needs. There is a good level of trust between parents and the staff and parents are always involved if any issues arise. Parents are also available to accompany children on visits.

Parents receive a useful booklet with information about the Cylch when their child begins at the Cylch. Parents are also well aware of the Cylch policies and have access to them. Parents complete a registration form and this is a record of useful information.

There is contact with the primary school to which the children transfer but overall this is underdeveloped.

The planning to extend children's experiences is done collaboratively and involves the local community. During the inspection a visit to a local chicken breeding location was very worthwhile. Children saw the different stages of development from eggs being incubated, chicks recently hatched under infra-red lamp and the older chicks. Children saw the care and attention required for chicks to develop.

The Cylch has also received very good support from the Local Authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin development officer. Such help and advice has been invaluable as the Cylch developed and practitioners are appreciative of the help they have received. This is an effective partnership.

Resource management: Good

The two permanent staff work together very effectively and a good rapport exists between them. During the inspection a trainee member of staff was present and made a significant contribution to the work of the Cylch.

Resources are well used to motivate children and to support children's learning. Future resource requirements have been identified and planned for. Children's visits to the locality are well planned and help to develop their skills across all areas of the curriculum. Such visits are carefully organised and assessed for possible risks.

Overall the Cylch has successfully applied for finance and the management committee is active in raising funding. Overall the Cylch provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There was a very good response to the parents' questionnaire. All respondents agreed with the following statements set out in the questionnaire:

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

My child is well prepared for moving on to school.

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

More than three-quarters of parents strongly agreed with the statements below.

My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.

Children behave well in the setting.

Teaching is good.

My child is safe at the setting.

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

The setting is well run.

Responses to discussions with children

Children of all ages enjoy their time at the Cylch and come in the morning with a sense of anticipation. They are soon fully involved in activities set out for them and are happy playing with their friends. A particularly good feature is the self-confidence they show enabling them to talk with a visitor for substantial periods of time.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	Reporting Inspector
--------------------	---------------------

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.