

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant

Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant

Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant

Powys

SY10 0JY

Date of inspection: 9/10 February 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

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.

Context

Cylch Meithrin Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant is located in the recently built primary school in the village. Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant is a rural village situated in North Powys some 12 miles to the north west of Welshpool.

The Cylch provides early years education through the medium of Welsh and is registered by the Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate up to 24 children. Children attend the Cylch from 2½ years old and leave in the term following their third birthday. Nearly all the children continue their education in the adjoining primary school.

The Cylch is located in the school hall – a large spacious facility. The Cylch has its own entrance – the hallway provides cloakroom and toilet facilities as well as a notice board that displays useful information for parents and carers. The hall is warm and set out to provide a variety of play stations for the children. However, because it is used by the school as a dining hall and for whole school assembly, its use by the Cylch is limited to certain times in the week. The Cylch meets on Monday and Thursday from 8.45 – 11.45 a.m. on Tuesday 1 p.m. – 3.30 p.m. and on Friday 1 p.m. – 2.30 p.m. during term time.

Currently there are 10 children on the register of whom 5 are 3 years old and funded for 10 hours a week. Children come from the village and the rural locality, socio-economically none are disadvantaged nor particularly advantaged. This is a typical Welsh rural community. One child is recognised as having special educational needs (SEN) and has 1:1 support. The Cylch welcomes children whatever their background or ability including children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Children have a good command of the Welsh language – the only exception being any child who has recently started at the Cylch. However, only a minority of children come from homes where the predominant language is Welsh, about half come from homes where one parent is Welsh speaking and the remainder come from English speaking homes.

The Cylch was previously inspected by Estyn in March 2006 and the recommendations addressed. The most recent CSSIW report was dated November 2011 and there were no regulatory requirements and the aspects noted to improve the provision have been undertaken.

Summary

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

Current performance

Good aspects

- Warm, homely and inviting atmosphere that greets children attending the Cylch.
- Positive and sensitive approach to developing children's Welsh language and linguistic skills.
- Cylch's Foundation Phase philosophy encouraging children to become independent learners.
- Children's personal and social development illustrated by their self-confidence and ability to form relationships.
- Committed staff with good working relationships and the well established links with parents.
- Supportive and effective management committee.
- Well established and effective child protection procedures.
- Effective links with the primary school.

Adequate

- Planning to ensure progression and continuity in children's knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Use of assessment to guide the planning by identifying the next steps in children's learning.

Prospects for improvement

Good

- The support provided by the school and notably the Nursery Class teacher is very good and augers very well for planning for improvement.
- Track record of implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum over relative brief period of time.
- Attendance at courses and use made of initiatives.
- Support provided by the management committee.
- The openness to change shown by the staff and their commitment to improvement.
- Support provided by the local authority and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

Adequate

- Self-evaluation has been undertaken recently but planning for improvement is underdeveloped.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the setting needs to:

- R1 plan to provide for continuity and progression in children's learning and to match learning activities to children's ability and prior attainment;
- R2 extend the assessment procedures to identify the next steps in individual children's learning;
- R3 to develop self-appraisal systems so as to regularly assess the educational provision and to plan future developments.

What happens next?

The Cylch will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the Cylch's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill 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?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

Long term planning is based on half termly themes and weekly learning experiences are based on the Foundation Phase outcomes. Weekly activities are focused on the six areas of learning and are suitably planned to successfully engage all children. Activities interest all the children and in the main meet their needs. The planning however is less well focused on building systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Learning activities are well directed at developing children's respect for each other and adults. Planned activities suitably encourage children to become confident and independent learners and to form good relationships. There are ample opportunities for children to develop their creative skills. There are also good opportunities for children to develop an understanding of the world and the need to care for living things.

Children are beginning to develop their skills, including their thinking skills and adults seek opportunities to develop these skills during children's activities.

The Welsh language and Welsh dimension are given a high priority. Virtually all children converse happily in the Welsh language, have a good understanding of the language and are comfortable using the language. Planning incorporates developing children's knowledge of some Welsh customs and celebrations, such as St. David's Day and Santes Dwynwen.

There are excellent opportunities provided by the School for children to learn about sustainability and recycling. The School is active in composting waste and growing vegetables as part of gardening activities which the young children in the Cylch observe and take part in planting and growing seeds and bulbs. Children's knowledge of people in other countries is developed through the study of Divali and the customs involved.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and high expectations of the children, particularly in terms of their personal and social skills, including children identified with additional learning needs (ALN). These expectations are very largely realised in practice.

Planning ensures a good balance between child-selected activities and adult-led tasks. Activities generally meet children's individual needs in that children are actively involved and interested in their work. Staff support children in their activities and children confidently seek advice when required. They react positively to suggestions made by adults.

Children's behaviour is very effectively managed, helped by providing them with a good range of interesting activities. Staff are very good language models and questions and discussion are well used to develop children's language.

All practitioners are well briefed and all are very active in supporting the children. Children are assessed regularly and observations recorded. This gives a good measure of children's progress. Whilst practitioners are well aware of children's ability, assessment results or outcomes are not always used when planning future activities so as to match tasks to children's needs and ability. As such, children are not sufficiently challenged. Assessment does not focus sufficiently on the next steps in children's learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The Cylch is very successful in promoting children's health and wellbeing. Values such as honesty, respect for the truth and a caring relationship are very well developed. Children clearly know the difference between right and wrong and the care and respect they show each other is a significant feature of life in the Cylch. Children share toys and resources without question and this contributes substantially towards the homely and supportive atmosphere prevalent in the Cylch. Children's

cultural development is enhanced through study and displays associated with Welsh customs and traditions.

Safeguarding arrangements are well established and effective. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and the leader is the person responsible in conjunction with the Registered Person for child protection. (The registered person is the school's nursery teacher and teaches in the adjacent classroom). Staff have undertaken recent training and the procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. In summary "The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding".

Specialist Services are used appropriately and when necessary children have professional support. There are effective links with specialist agencies who provide information and guidance as required. Good links are in place with the primary school and this provides for continuity in the child's development.

Children identified with additional learning needs (ALN) have full access to all areas of learning and parents are regularly consulted. When necessary, children are provided with 1:1 support.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children are treated equally with respect and have access to all areas of the setting's provision. There is a clear emphasis on recognising individuality, personal needs and in celebrating individual achievements. Individually staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and display the expertise needed to create a stimulating environment for learning. They ensure that sessions are well paced and resources are well used to support children's learning. Resources are immediately available to the children enabling them to work independently. The school's outside facilities are of a high standard and available for the Cylch to use. Overall, the accommodation is very well maintained.

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

Leadership: Good

The Cylch displays a sense of purpose in its work and since her appointment the leader has worked in partnership with the Registered person to promote and to sustain improvement. This has also successfully provided the Cylch with good strategic direction to its work. The support provided has impacted positively on the leadership. Learning and teaching are managed well and staff work together very well. Policies are in place and procedures are effective. Overall, the Foundation Phase curriculum is successfully implemented.

Relationships are very good. Staff know their roles and value children as individuals. This provides for a happy, contented atmosphere to which children are happy to come for each session. The Cylch is well supported by the management committee who fulfil their legal duties. Questionnaires circulated to parents indicate their satisfaction and appreciation of the work of the staff.

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

Improving quality: Adequate

Since their recent appointment both staff have come to know their setting well and make good use of all facilities available to the Cylch. This has ensured good provision for the children and areas for development have been recognised. Staff show a positive culture of self-evaluation and a willingness and openness to new ideas. Staff are sensitive to the views and expectations of the children. Overall, the setting is developing well with staff being well supported in their professional development by the school, the local authority and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. Aspects for development and improving the provision have been identified as part of the self-evaluation process, but due to the recent appointment of the Cylch staff, is at an early stage of development. Planning, as yet, does not incorporate a plan for future development.

Partnership working: Good

Good partnership arrangements are in place and have made a significant contribution to the educational provision and subsequently to children's achievement and wellbeing. A notable and very good partnership has been established with the school and particularly with the Nursery teacher who is also the Registered person. This has provided the Cylch with professional support and advice during the period of transition. The strong links with the primary school provide the Cylch with excellent facilities, particularly the outdoor play and study areas.

The Cylch has strong links with parents and carers and good account is taken of their views, such as informing them of themes and activities to be undertaken as part of the Cylch's day-to-day activities. They are appreciative on the care and support their children have and the approachability of the staff. The work of the Cylch and its development is well supported by the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. Additional support is provided by outside organisations when required.

Resource management: Good

The Cylch has access to the excellent school facilities. It has immediate access to the infant play area with its large toys and soft play area. Numerous moveable toys are available, together with a covered area where children can work and play. There are also yard facilities immediately to hand for ball games and other physical activities. The school also has an extensive grassed area and a thriving garden where fruits and vegetables are grown. This is available for the children to see and to appreciate seed and bulb planting, growing and how plants are cared for.

The Cylch uses the school hall which is well used, providing ample space for a good range of activities. The one disadvantage is that the hall is a multi-used hall, necessitating clearing away the resources after each session. However, the school allows a section of the hall to be used as a storage and display area. Spending is in line with the priorities and the available resources are well matched to the

requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The management committee takes care of the finances.

The Cylch provides good value for money and spending has a positive impact on children's standards of achievement and wellbeing.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parents questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (less than 10).

Response to discussions with children

All children enjoy their time at the Cylch. They show their enjoyment when coming to the sessions and are soon actively involved in the range of activities set out for them. They are greeted by the staff but soon are engaged with their peers on the different activities. Children are self-confident and independent but know where to seek advice.

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.